

A NEW “LOOK” AT THE CANON: DE-FAMILIARIZING THE WORKS OF
THACKERAY, DICKENS, COLLINS, AND GASKELL THROUGH A RECOVERY OF
THEIR ILLUSTRATIONS

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ABSTRACT

CLARE DOUGLASS: A New “Look” at the Canon: De-familiarizing the Works of Thackeray, Dickens, Collins, and Gaskell through a Recovery of their Illustrations
(Under the direction of Dr. Beverly Taylor)

This project examines the role of illustration in the serialized fiction of William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Elizabeth Gaskell during the period of 1847-1868, when illustrated fiction reached its height in Victorian England. Illustrations featured in much of 19th-century British fiction, but these images, at one time paramount in the reading and marketing of such literature, rarely receive close attention in literary criticism and the literature classroom. Not only does this absence of such a vital textual element compromise the experience of these works, but it prevents the modern reader from engaging with and understanding the complex relationship between reading and seeing.

Interweaving literary theory regarding the physical and conceptual space of the book and literary analysis of the complex relationship between image and word, I situate a canonical text by each author in its historical period and the Victorian reading marketplace as I explore the influence of illustration on the reception of the written text for today’s readers. Examining these illustrations demonstrates the complex illuminative effects of Thackeray’s working as both author and illustrator in *Vanity Fair*; the reflection of Dickens’s textual content and mixed narrative style in *Our Mutual Friend*; the translation of an English novel in an American journal and the presence of a visual meta-narrative in *The Moonstone*; and the visual manipulation, or revision, of key elements in Gaskell’s *Wives and Daughters*. In analyzing specific illustrations and the ways in which they mediate, revise, and alternately

support or resist the text to moderate reader understanding and interpretation, I consider the variety and expression of authorial control and the act of interpretation as implicitly emphasized and challenged through the relationship between image and text in each work. In reclaiming these visual elements I assert the importance of interdisciplinarity in literary studies as well as the pedagogical significance of expanding traditional critical approaches to account for a variety of media.

To my mother, Ann, and my father, Bill, for their unconditional love and support every step of the way—you are more than parents; you are friends. To my brothers, Duncan and Davis, who are always there when I need them. No one could ask for a more wonderful family. Finally, to Tara, my friend and touchstone throughout this scary, wonderful, and challenging experience. You have made the hard times bearable and the fun times unforgettable. I love you all so much, and I am blessed to know each one of you. It has been a long road, but I could not have made it without you, and from the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

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Introduction

“I get my bread by drawing and engraving on wood for the cheap periodicals.”
(Walter Hartright, *The Woman in White*, p. 433)

She seeks to underpin the imagination, not to crush it, to point the way, not to tether. She is an unavowed love, and yet would wish to be more, for her place is often in the shade. All we usually know is that she exists. And yet she can be enchanting. Her name is illustration. This alone is certain; the rest is open.

(Joachim Möller, Preface, *Imagination on a Long Rein: English Literature Illustrated*, p. 7)

Though rather sentimental, Joachim Möller’s description of illustration conveys its complex nature, which strikes its viewer on both an emotional and an intellectual level. Yet despite its capacity to impact all who view it, illustration resists universal interpretation. As Möller continues, “illustrations... elude the trite approach, being primarily the result of a personal response to the text, a no-man’s-land for scholarly method, private property.” However, we can, and do, still strive to place illustrations in the historical trajectory of marketing and publication as well as interpret their significance and impact in what Julie Stone Peters describes as the “theatre of the book.”

Much of the Victorian period, and especially the 1860s, saw a surge in illustration in both periodicals and popular novels. The creation of wood-engravings intended solely to accompany literary texts in the 1840s and the rise in periodicals as an affordable and popular medium for illustration in the 1860s make the middle and second half of the century an

especially fertile period for my analysis of text and image in this project (Goldman 12-13).¹

How the presence of illustrations affected the work of Wilkie Collins; his friend and sometime partner Charles Dickens; another important writer who also submitted fiction to Dickens's periodical publications and was familiar with both the serial and multi-volume novel, Elizabeth Gaskell; as well as the editor, writer, and illustrator William Makepeace Thackeray, will be one of the central issues of my dissertation. By examining their work and the cultural and historical context in which it appeared I will treat the central topic of this project: the function and degree of influence of visual art in and in conjunction with fiction of the mid-Victorian period.

Illustration: Culture and Context

As indications of the interests of the Victorian market, illustrations and illustrated texts are important in re-constructing the social and historical heritage of publishing. However, they are also critically important within the microcosm of each book, for although they are often overlooked in contemporary criticism, they in fact have the power to subvert text. As Stephen C. Behrendt points out, illustrations “facilitate the act of seeing, but they also significantly limit it: the illustrator makes visual choices *for* us. Furthermore, the introduction of illustrations into a volume is in reality the introduction (or *intrusion*) of a third party. This third party can only be regarded as a critic – as an interpreter or elucidator – no matter how precisely ‘literal’ his or her illustrations may claim to be, for as William Blake correctly declared, ‘Imitation is Criticism’” (29-30). Möller describes illustration as

¹ Paul Goldman's *Victorian Illustrated Books 1850-1870: The Heyday of Wood-Engraving*, Forrest Reid's *Illustrators of the Sixties*, and Gleeson White's *English Illustration 'The Sixties': 1855-70* offer insight into developments and illustrative style as well as emphasize the significance of this particular period in the history of illustration.

“imagination on a long rein,” “decorative as an embellishment to the book, interpretive as a commentary, frequently a source of inspiration and sometimes corrective.” Examining the function of these images in cooperation with the text through what Möller terms a “synchronic” approach, in which one “assess[es] the compatibility of text and picture in individual instances” (8), will allow us to appreciate more fully the experience of the mixed-media works of these authors for both the Victorian and the modern reader-viewer. Given the extent to which illustrations can moderate and influence the reader’s understanding of the text, it is imperative that we consider and appreciate their roles in the context of the book.

As “illustration” changed in meaning over the centuries, from the spiritual “illumination” or enlightenment of the Middle Ages to examples for clarification in the late 1500s and finally the pictorial images and plates of the 19th century, it continued to be complicated not only by expanded meaning but by expanded usage in a variety of mixed-media formats, from gift books to periodicals and the serial publications that will feature in this project (Maxwell “Walter Scott” 1). Much attention has been given to the subjects of the Victorian serial and illustration and for good reason. Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, in their innovative work *The Victorian Serial*, suggest that the format of the serial itself is inherently Victorian, reflecting both the changes and daily life of the period. Defining the serial as “a continuing story over an extended time with enforced interruptions” (1), Hughes and Lund point out that the serial became so “pervasive” during this period that Thomas Arnold came to “consider it a new phenomenon in the 1830s, suggest[ing] that something in the culture of the time made it especially receptive to the serial” (4). They point out that while the increase in literacy and affordability of the serial made it more popular, its very form of alternating between periods of waiting and satisfaction reflected the middle-class

work ethic, linked both to capitalism and religious belief, as well as the models of history and biology that came to be based on a new understanding of measured development and evolution over time (4-7). Serialized fiction, with its installments often including an illustrated cover and two plates, served as both a reprieve from daily life for readers and a mirror of it. These plates were an enticement to potential buyers who could see them in the last issue and on display in shop windows as advertisements for the current issue. According to Philip V. Allingham, each image also functioned as “handy aide-mémoire” (113) intended to remind readers of the events of previous installments. Richard Altick suggests an additional function of illustrations as a democratizing tool, citing Charles Knight’s “emphasis upon pictures as a means of bringing printed matter to the attention of a public unaccustomed to reading” in his *Penny Magazine* begun in 1832 (332-335). Q. D. Leavis expands on this idea by pointing to the visual simplification or explication of text characteristic of the association between image and word in printed political commentary:

Thus we have a public which, even when highly literate, was accustomed to a visual art going hand in hand with the presentation of political ideas and their discussion and with a moralistic literature, and that part of it which was semi-literate or illiterate had at least had this visual education. All were accustomed to taking in ideas in a stylized art form and had an imagination formed by the tradition of moral satire independent of literacy. Thus when the novel ceased to be entirely an expensive three-volume product for the upper classes and library-subscribers, because it was discovered that cheap part-publication was feasible to reach a larger public altogether, the parts *had* to be illustrated, and artists like Cruikshank who were caricaturists became also famous illustrators of books. (333)

Audiences came to expect and even rely on illustrations, and today’s culture similarly relies on the visual (granted in different formats), just as much as these early “readers,” if not more. Though images accompanying text were not new in the 19th century, sensational descriptions of executions and disaster having appeared in broadside ballads alongside simple woodcuts

in the 1600s (Altick 28), technological advances in the Victorian period allowed for more detailed and prolific illustrations. In fact, Altick identifies the prominence of illustrations during the mid-1800s as “the most influential novelty during this period” (343). As the century progressed, having numerous illustrations became one of the three basic elements Altick identifies as distinguishing a “popular” periodical (363). Appreciating the context and market function of these images in the Victorian period provides an important foundation from which to further explore their narrative and aesthetic influence in the experience of the texts they accompany and will give us a fuller appreciation of these multi-media works as well as a more complete understanding of the Victorian period and audience.

The confluence of technological developments and audience interest and expectation regarding images also made textual illustration a space for great creativity and art experimentation. According to Richard Maxwell, “[b]y working out ever-newer techniques for selling images in codex format rather than as independent works, the great nineteenth-century publishing networks absorbed a huge amount of artistic activity into mass-market publishing” (“Introduction” xxiii). Maxwell suggests, “illustration and literature... fed off each other” (xxv), making illustration “so central to Victorian England that it consistently influenced pursuits that were, in theory, much more prestigious,” from “grand narrative painting” to gift books² in which poems were written for illustrations and even the theatre, where staged tableaux copied textual illustrations (xxii). Herbert F. Tucker expands on this increasingly central role of illustration as an element that was “at first a mere adjunct to reading but soon indispensable”:

² Herbert F. Tucker points to these gift books, made possible by technological developments in the 1820s that “boosted the visibilia of the book,” as “permanently alter[ing] the relation between author and illustrator” and so opening the door for a shift in creative power regarding the visual-verbal dynamic (165).

In its technologically assisted evolution from full page to half page to the let-in images best known from John Tenniel's work in the Alice books, the illustration looks like a calibrated detonation implanted, with advancing insistence and finesse, into the continuum of a reader's verbal attention. (168)

Given all of the writers and artists that at some point at least dabbled in illustration, either to suit their own creative visions or to cater to popular demand, the illustrative arts represent a locus of creativity and a space for social, critical, and artistic discussion and experimentation that deserves ongoing critical attention. By exploring the dynamics between text and image, we not only expand our understanding of the relationship between these sister arts in general, but in each specific work we witness the working out of these efforts and methods as they shape the reading experience.

So, Why Illustration?

During the early stages of developing my ideas for this project, a friend asked what my dissertation would be about. Trying to articulate thoughts that were as yet only roughly defined in my mind, in fewer than a thousand words and in a description that would be neither vague nor incomprehensible, I began by telling him that my subject would be English, illustrated fiction from the middle of the nineteenth century. I tried to pin down, for me as much as for him, my methodology and told him my motives arose from a belief that by excluding illustrations from modern editions we were missing out on something crucial to our understanding of them and compromising their creators' visions and intentions. Expressing, or perhaps artfully feigning, interest, he then posed what proved to be a very interesting question, one that was obvious yet no less thought provoking: "Why aren't books illustrated today?" At the time, I fumbled for a response, throwing out thoughts about how

illustration had been relegated to a means of appealing to and educating children. With a kind yet dismissive “Hmm, sounds interesting,” the conversation experienced only a brief lull before quickly recovering and moving on to some other random topic. His question stuck with me, longer, I suspect, than it stuck with him or with any of the other members of our group. I continued to ponder why a reader of popular fiction could not walk into her local bookstore and purchase a *New York Times* bestselling novel packed with vivid illustrations and an enticing frontispiece, other than the obligatory cover image, which itself often appears with only minimalist detail so as to retain a sense of intellectual respectability and significance. It seemed to me that today, a detailed cover image, let alone multiple illustrations within the pages of a book, is typically only to be found in the children’s department or in the secret, guilty pleasures of the romance section.

However, the more thought I gave to the subject, the more I came to realize that illustration has not been abandoned altogether, but has changed or evolved³ in both form and function. In fact, in a recent article in *The New York Times Book Review*, titled “Cover Stories,” Field Maloney analyzes the craft of the cover image for contemporary novels. Describing modern styling as “the big book look,” with big name, big title, and “smallish iconic image,” Maloney characterizes the main trend for popular fiction by analyzing jacket covers for novels by Michael Chrichton, Danielle Steel, and Stephen King (31). Clearly, then, illustration and fiction have not gone their separate ways entirely, though, as in modern art, visual elements on (or in) contemporary novels tend to be more minimalistic and suggestive rather than explicitly “illustrative.” Such qualities likely were anticipated by the illuminations of Thackeray and certainly represent the creative inheritance of a sort of legacy

³ My usage of this term is not intended to be evaluative in any way, to suggest that this change marks an improvement, but rather refers to the sense of connection to and transformation from the earlier function of illustration and mixed-media formats of the 19th century.

of illustration manifested in the works and disciplines of the authors and illustrators discussed here. Some of these contemporary changes in appearance and use can be attributed to transformations in audience taste and expectation as well as developments in technology. Today most illustration appears in one of three printed media: the photography of magazines (including everything from photographs of today's movie stars in tabloids to nature shots and photographs of well decorated homes in magazines devoted to interior design); the drawings that accompany children's stories; and the educational illustrations, photographs, graphs, etc., that offer visual explanations of texts in reference materials, such as encyclopedias and text books. In these materials images serve less of an aesthetic function intended to heighten suspense and our emotional experience of a text and more of an informative function intended to educate their audiences (though as I will explore later, Thackeray's illustrations, in particular, function in not dissimilar ways to instruct while entertaining the reader).

Further consideration of these changes and developments in popular illustration made me realize that we are really living in a time when seeing and the visual are of supreme importance—perhaps more so than ever. With satellites and televisions, wireless computers, portable DVD players, picture phones, and numerous other products of modern technology, we have become a society driven by images and bombarded by them at such a rate and frequency that our capacity for multi-tasking and dividing attention to take in so much has expanded and changed visual expectation. The relevance of these 19th-century illustrations seems all the more clear as they not only link the current visual market with its earlier stages and manifestations but they allow for canonical texts in the classroom to participate in this popular and familiar visual exchange between audience and object. This project, then, complicates and broadens critical study of these works as well as has greater pedagogical

implications regarding not only what we teach but how we teach in response to technological advancements, student sensory expectation, and an ever increasing interdisciplinarity in academia. To not give illustrated fiction the time and deference it deserves would be an intellectual failure on the part of the contemporary critic and suggests the sort of narrow-mindedness and limited critical approach that scholars try to avoid. With such issues in mind, I argue for the “equal but different” approach to defining the categories of illustrated and non-illustrated fiction and hope to reclaim these illustrated texts for future literary critics and the classroom.

Project Plan and Methodology

Certainly, I cannot illuminate all of the complicated nuances surrounding the novel and illustration here, and a broad survey of both 19th-century and modern texts is beyond the scope of this project, but we can still gain a great deal from considering these questions regarding the past and future of illustration—questions whose many layers could be fruitfully explored for years into the future. By asking these questions as they relate to the 19th century, we can inform our understanding of the limited and changed use of illustrations today by our understanding of the form and function of illustrations in the past, and come to see illustration and the texts they were intended for in new and enlightened ways.⁴ Among the things, then, that can be gained through the project at hand are an appreciation of the market influences at the moment of creation on texts that we still read as part of the literary cannon today, a greater understanding of our own creative and publishing heritage, and,

⁴ For a consideration of the fate of illustration as transformed (though not eliminated) in the 20th century, see Richard Maxwell’s Afterword, “The Destruction, Rebirth, and Apotheosis of the Victorian Illustrated Book,” in *The Victorian Illustrated Book*.

finally, the reclamation of these texts in their original or early formats. By encountering these mixed-media texts as they were created then, we can know the full sensory experience of these works whose richness and even meaning has been compromised and not fully appreciated due to the exclusion of illustrations from more recent editions—editions that typically find their way into our classrooms, curricula, and cultural consciousness but that are, in essence, a shadow of the original texts and experiences.

I have modeled my approach to this subject and my analysis on several interdisciplinary studies, having taken aspects from each that best serve the purposes of this project. First, it is critical to clarify my terminology and its usage specific to my work. Several terms for “illustrate” and “illustration” appear as interchangeable in my text; however, I am aware of their variable meanings and so will try to explain my usage of the most volatile terms here. For example, as Wolfgang Iser points out, the term “representation” has become almost synonymous with “mimesis” in much literary criticism, but like Iser, I prefer the understanding of the term as informed by “the German *Darstellung*... i.e., as not referring to any object given prior to the act of representation” (217). Though I am aware of the many points of connection between the word and the image it inspires, this usage denotes my belief that to illustrate a text is not only to translate it visually but to make something new, as informed by the skill, method, and motivation of the artist. In addition, combining the text with the image produces a new, multi-sensory experience. I also use “realize/realization” interchangeably with “illustrate/illustration,” though I appreciate Martin Meisel’s distinction between the two, according to which realization “giv[es] concrete perceptual form to a literary text” while illustration represents “interpretive recreation” (32). Meisel makes a valid and insightful point in distinguishing between the two, but for the sake

of this project I will apply both terms in my analysis since I believe that all of the images incorporate both aspects of meaning, even if in varying ratios and degrees.

The impetus for this project came from my own interest in visual art and literature as well as from Meisel's work *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England*. Revising his approach to focus more closely on select works and their illustrations, I adopt his sense of the interconnectedness between the textual and the visual as part of a web of creativity constantly moving back and forth from medium to medium across page, stage, and image. I have also looked to Mieke Bal's *Reading "Rembrandt": Beyond the Word-Image Opposition* as a model and rationale for both my subject and approach. Accepting her foundational tenet that the "interpretive juxtaposition" between "verbal and visual 'texts'" "can generate insight into the strategies of representation and of interpretation, as distinct from medium-bound devices, and can help generate a broader perspective on other cultural issues" (5), I look to my analysis and the mixed-media works themselves as having broader implications for reading, seeing, creating, and even teaching. I have also attempted to stave off objections to the potential subjectivity of my analysis by acknowledging and adopting what Bal identifies as "a radically reception-oriented approach" (6), which in itself exemplifies the interpretive project that these mixed-media texts represent and demonstrates that "the continuity and interdependence between producing and processing works of art makes interpretation as important, as valuable, as writing and painting" (13), (something even Oscar Wilde promoted in *The Critic as Artist*). At the same time, although I provide historical contexts for each work and suggest that by encountering these novels as they were originally illustrated we gain insight into the Victorian reading market and experience, I have not attempted to assign absolute

intentionality on the part of the authors and illustrators according to their biographies.

Rather, I have focused on what their products suggest about the authors, illustrators, and reading markets and ultimately how the illustrations influence the reading experience of the audience, thereby attempting to avoid a potential pitfall that Bal identifies as occurring when “repressing the subjectivity of the analyst, the author’s alleged intentions are burdened with, and sometimes buried under, projections by the former passed off as intentions of the latter” (5). This results in a reception-based study, instead of a conception-oriented one, and the sort of cross-disciplinary “readings” I have already introduced, which however do have important critical implications regarding history-of-the-book studies, novel theory, author and illustrator biographies, and interdisciplinary research and pedagogy. My methodology reflects as well Möller’s aforementioned “synchronic” approach in regard to individual mixed-media artifacts, as each represents a specific artistic and creative moment (experienced with each reading) particular to that project and in which the tensions between the verbal and the visual remain critical and singular to each work. Though together they shed light on the broader scope of image-text dynamics and are important for this in their own right, the separate verbal-visual products must be considered individually to best understand the significance of each novel for scholars and students alike.

At first glance, a project that attempts to study the work of William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Elizabeth Gaskell seems absurdly unwieldy, as well as condemned by the impossibility of creating a new path across a terrain where countless scholars have already trod throughout the past hundred and fifty years. Admittedly, such a project seems doomed before it starts, destined to suffer from a failure of having nothing “new” to offer and fated to fall by the wayside of academic scholarship.

However, it is this very perspective and the failure to “see” an element crucial to seemingly familiar texts that makes their selection a sound one. In defense of the limited perspective that I criticize here, it has been unknowingly influenced by incomplete access to these works as their authors originally conceived of them. Much of this failure in perspective stems from a lack of knowledge due to the decisions of publishers and publishing houses, probably responding to demands of cost and the expectations of a contemporary audience unaccustomed to illustrated adult fiction, to not reproduce the original illustrations. In an effort to reclaim these illustrations, this project sheds new light on select canonical texts so that modern readers and scholars can experience them anew and appreciate nuances of content and structure previously not encountered even after years of reading and re-reading these works.

Thackeray, Dickens, Collins, and Gaskell were among the most popular writers of their age and, still considered representative of the period, are incorporated into many literature curricula. Each of these authors wrote works that included illustrations, often in rather different ways. However, these illustrations typically do not make it through the classroom door, a fact which results in the failure to fully experience their work and its context. Through analyzing a specific work by each of these individuals, I will complicate our understanding of the novels and point out the different ways in which illustration functions in the texts of each author.

By devoting a chapter to a particular work by each of these historically significant authors I intend to broaden our understanding of these texts, illustration, and the canon to which they belong. First, I consider Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*. Thackeray and his illustrations stand apart from the others in this project in that he created the illustrations for

his own text. This intriguing dynamic and the ways it modifies the experience of both image and text, allowing not only for social critique but for a verbal-visual exchange that challenges and illuminates the very media in which he works and the understanding of these by his audience, will be an important part of this chapter and our understanding of his fiction. His work as both author and illustrator also represents the extreme end of the mixed-media spectrum in which the artist exercises, even as he mocks and manipulates, maximum authorial control.

The following chapter discusses Marcus Stone's illustrations for Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* and the ways in which Stone's seemingly inconsistent images often convey the novel's most emotive moments and ultimately reflect Dickens's hybrid narrative style. A project dealing with Victorian illustration practically demands including Dickens, and his important role in navigating the production of such mixed-media texts and his notorious habit of keeping (or trying to keep) his illustrators on a short leash make his work a logical starting point for my consideration of authors and artists in collaboration. Additionally, his novels are among the few Victorian novels still occasionally available in illustrated form, though traditionally Stone's illustrations have been dismissed as unskilled and ineffectual. Given Dickens's close relationship with Collins and their exchange of influence, I will move from my discussion of Dickens's work to an examination of Collins's *The Moonstone*, which appeared with illustrations in its American serialization for *Harper's Weekly*.

Collins's fiction has been largely overlooked and, although he has garnered more critical attention of late, in the past decades scholars have failed to fully appreciate his career and have not taken his work very seriously, relegating it to the literary sub-genre of the "sensational." Given this fact, a large space in literary criticism remains for the study of

Collins's work, especially as it relates to the significance of art and illustration in his fiction. An alliance of my own personal interest, the historical and literary significance of his work and its form, and a practical consideration of the field make Collins an excellent subject for this project. My chapter on Collins and *The Moonstone* explores how an English author's work is realized visually in an American journal, considering the relationship between the novel's narrative structure and the running pictorial narrative of the illustrations.

Like the work of Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell's fiction has not been given the critical attention it deserves, especially in comparison to such traditionally canonical authors as Dickens and Thackeray, though in recent years she has become more popular in feminist criticism of the Victorian period. This resurgence of interest in Gaskell's fiction, does not mean, however, that no space remains to approach her work from a different perspective. In fact, in her 2002 assessment of Gaskell studies, "Ten Years of Gaskell Criticism," Susan Hamilton points out the rather limited scope of criticism as it has tended to focus largely on issues of gender at the expense of other avenues of inquiry. This is not to say that my approach to her work is divorced from gender entirely, for the process of publishing fiction from the perspective of a woman is not insignificant and proves especially interesting in regard to the well known illustrator of her work and his manipulation of the text.⁵ My analysis of Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, which appeared serially in *The Cornhill Magazine* with illustrations by George du Maurier, will follow my chapter on Collins and the journal serialization of *The Moonstone*. Gaskell worked under both Dickens and Thackeray

⁵ Although much of Gaskell's work appeared serially, she seems to have preferred the book format, considering the unnatural division of her stories into periodical pieces to be both detrimental to the stories themselves and a violation of her work and creative autonomy, as suggested by her dispute with Dickens over the divisions of *North and South* and her letter to Harriet Martineau in which she states, "Indeed I do not like writing a *long* story to be broken up into little bits in a serial publication" (*Further Letters* 227). Selecting Gaskell as a key figure in this project will allow for reflection on this format and the resulting influence of the juxtaposition between image and text as it presents an alternative critical approach to her work in relation to art and illustration.

as editors and so fits seamlessly into this project for her mass appeal, her inclusion in the canon, and her participation in this network of creativity. This particular novel demonstrates yet another important connection as Gaskell's authorial skill comes together with (and confronts) the established artist, du Maurier's, artistic skill; the visions of two masters of their arts unite and result in media products that at times cooperate and at times resist one another, in an illustrated work that challenges even as it enriches the interpretive process.

At the most general, though certainly not unimportant, level, my analysis of these illustrated novels argues for the reclamation and value of the illustrations and illustrated editions, in both criticism and the classroom. Underscoring this argument, then, are the critical points regarding interpretation and the range of author (and artist) influence that this project demonstrates in its analysis. Certainly we gain insight into the Victorian literary marketplace and the original readers of these texts, but, in addition to this, by examining the relationship between the text and image we also expand our understanding of the intriguing complexities that both link and differentiate these sister arts as we experience the interpretive challenges they pose. While all of these works exist along a continuum of novel history and mixed-media production, each one alone represents an important subject. In considering each novel and its illustrations we witness a range of authorial control across media, from Collins and Gaskell's limited or non-existent control to Dickens and Thackeray's near complete control. Through this project I not only show these variations but also demonstrate that the images prove vital to the texts and our experience of them by offering new, verbal-visual "readings" that de-familiarize seemingly familiar works and contest the explicitly linguistic nature of the literary canon.

Chapter I

Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, and the Author as Artist: Text and “Illuminative” Illustration

William Makepeace Thackeray wrote and illustrated cleverly and with intention to create the sort of mixed-media work exemplified by his novel *Vanity Fair* that, as he reveals in his correspondence, he believed could not only entertain but instruct:

What I mean applies to my own case & that of all of us – who set up as Satirical-Moralists – and having such a vast multitude of readers whom we not only amuse but teach. And indeed, a solemn prayer to God Almighty was in my thoughts that we may never forget truth & Justice and kindness as the great ends of our profession. There’s something of the same strain in *Vanity Fair*. (*Letters* 2: 282)

These creative efforts result in an illustrated novel that presents characters who are not faultless but rather, in their very imperfections, more real and accessible to their readers. As Mrs. Procter (wife to poet Bryan Waller Procter, pen name “Barry Cornwall”) wrote on July 23, 1847 to Abraham Hayward, a critic and writer who relied largely on Mrs. Procter’s assessment of the novel in his review of it, “The characters are neither devils nor angels, but living, breathing people” (*Letters* 2: 312 and n. 87). Thackeray did not instruct his audience only by writing of the dissolute lives and desires of inevitably weak characters, characters whose social ambitions and personal foibles were, and are, all too relevant for readers; he also instructed his audience in the craft of interpretation, so that reading, seeing, and understanding themselves comprise, in large part, the true subject of the novel as the reader experiences the full extent of Thackeray’s authorial control in both text and image.

Within the text individuals misrepresent and misread themselves and one another, and although these incidents may be obvious to the audience, the reader, like these characters, strives to interpret correctly the seemingly mixed signals of Thackeray's verbal-visual dynamic, which both assists and resists revelation. In creating this tense relationship between two media he echoes the action within the novel and challenges the audience to acquire the interpretive insights that the characters lack and to approach both society and even literature itself, including this novel, with a degree of skepticism. The mixed-media format of *Vanity Fair* provides the perfect venue for this, and as it marks the beginning of Thackeray's commercially and critically successful career it also represents a revised, or perhaps even a new⁶, hybrid literary genre in which the author alternately underscores and undercuts his text by its association with his own illuminations.

In the tradition of William Blake, Thackeray illustrated his own work, and, like Blake's, Thackeray's images do not always function as independent, visual narrations directly correlating to a specific passage of the text. Though some of his illustrations do operate in the traditional ways of illustration, echoing story content and foreshadowing future action, even elements of these seemingly conventional images frequently resist the text in certain ways, revealing a character's artifice to the audience, for example, though it remains unexposed to the other characters. One of the most interesting elements of Thackeray's art and *Vanity Fair* is his use of illustrated capitals, reminiscent of illuminated manuscripts, at

⁶ In contrast to J. R. Harvey and Anthony Burton's suggestion that Thackeray's limited artistic talent detracts from his text (though even Harvey acknowledges the skill of his illustrated capitals), I believe that these very "limitations," if they are such, contribute to a sort of innovative, or revised, mixed-media work that allows for both the instructive and compelling interpretative challenge and the verbal-visual satire that distinguish the work and the reading experience. Certainly Thackeray's work is reminiscent of 18th-century visual satire, exemplified by the art of Hogarth and Gillray, and the caricature style of such artists as Cruikshank, but the extent to which he intertwines the visual and the verbal so that to separate either compromises and changes the whole indicates Thackeray's development of a sort of "novel illumination" with its implicit promotion of interpretive act as the work's overarching theme.

the beginning of most chapters. Certainly Thackeray seems to adopt qualities of both Blake and these early manuscripts, but he makes them his own by taking textually, historically, and culturally charged symbols that relate to the novel, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, and compelling the reader to discover their relevance and understand the text that follows accordingly. These illustrations physically demonstrate the relationship between word (or letter) and image and reflect the artist's manipulation of both in a way that challenges and intrigues the audience. This dynamic comes up in Tucker's discussion of Victorian illustration when he responds to Roland Barthes's question, "Does the image duplicate certain of the informations given in the text by a phenomenon of redundancy or does the text add a fresh information to the image?"⁷ with a resounding "Yes, and yes" (167). Perhaps nowhere else is this dual function realized so expertly and effectively as in *Vanity Fair*, for via the intricate relationship between *his* text and *his* illustrations—a relationship in which one medium alternately supports and resists the other—Thackeray realizes the full arc of the illustrative arts by guiding and challenging the reader in the very acts of reading, seeing, and interpreting.

In this chapter I will highlight this verbal-visual dynamic by considering how the audience interprets these images and how the images shape the reading experience. After establishing the creative and social context for *Vanity Fair* by touching on both Thackeray's history and the novel's initial reception, I will explore the illustrations and illuminations that both challenge and correspond with the text but in this case, unlike the other works discussed in the project, function in accordance with the intention and overall vision of the author-artist. My analysis will focus primarily on the illustrated capitals, which I believe to be

⁷ See "Rhetoric of the Image" in *Image—Music—Text* for the full essay by Barthes, based on, as Tucker mentions, Stephen Heath's "highly faithful translation," which includes the significant though "unidiomatic" use of "'informations' and 'a fresh information'" (203, n. 10).

interesting AND difficult given their frequent divergence from explicit narrative and their use of sign and metaphor. I divide my exploration of these into two sections. The first focuses on the incorporation of letters within the capital image in a way that requires the reader to search the illustration and piece together the letter and the rest of the word that begin the section. The second part explores what might be understood as the opposite composition in which the letter, instead of being embedded in the image, actually frames the illustration and features as the largest part of the spatial scene. Finally, I devote the last section of this chapter to considering the presence of narrator and author within the text as reflected in both individual illustrations and these capital images. Within this section I also explore the incorporation of various characters (including the narrator and author) in these illustrations as underscoring the role of the author in manipulating the novel's character-puppets, as the frame of the story indicates, and demonstrating that even the narrator and the author do not escape the text's censure. Of course, it is ultimately up to readers to follow Thackeray's signs and connect his complex, multi-layered work to their own lives and societies in the way that he originally envisioned. To realize this goal he created poignant inconsistencies that challenge and impress but that make his real-life "dolls" seem surprisingly relevant and his verbal-visual text a compelling means for the audience to practice and improve critical interpretive skills.

Thackeray: A Biographical and Creative Background

As Peter Shillingsburg points out, "Thackeray's aspirations to write and paint, when he was yet young and an heir, were of the gentlemanly sort, acceptable pastimes but unacceptable professions. And yet the climate was changing" (131). Thackeray's life and

career illustrate this changing climate as he ultimately found success by pursuing his writing professionally. Although Thackeray drew and wrote as a hobby during his travels as a young man, he initially applied himself seriously to art after abandoning his brief pursuit of a career in law—a profession deemed more suitable by his family. Upon coming of age and finally acquiring his inheritance, he paid off his Cambridge-period gambling debts and traveled to Paris to study art. However, his debauched lifestyle and aimless pursuits soon grew tiresome and inspired him to purchase *The National Standard* in 1833 in an effort to become more professionally focused. He proceeded to serve as Paris Correspondent for the journal until the paper failed in 1834. In addition, he worked as an art critic for *Fraser's Magazine* in the 1830s and continued to practice his painting (Shillingsburg 38-43). After realizing that his humorous sketches would never compete with academic artists, he gave up on painting and turned to writing and editing for various papers, at least partly driven by his desire to marry and support Isabella Shawe. Over the next six years Thackeray wrote prolifically, even publishing his first four books. From 1840 to the beginning of 1847, when *Vanity Fair* began its serial run, Thackeray continued writing at an impressive rate, publishing three books, including the serialization of *Barry Lyndon* in *Fraser's Magazine*, and 386 works for various magazines, all under pseudonyms (49). Yet he never abandoned his love of visual art entirely, despite his failure to support himself solely by the artist's pen. So much interested in visual art and illustration, he at one point auditioned as replacement illustrator for Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* but was rejected (Melville 104). Even his letters⁸, interspersed with sketches and drawings, reveal his desire to express himself visually and attest to his being, as Stephen Canham points out, “a compulsive doodler” (462). His success in writing allowed him to pursue drawing professionally on the side. This “journalistic jack-of-all

⁸ See Gordon N. Ray's four-volume edition of Thackeray's letters for examples of these images.

trades,” to use Robert Paul Fletcher’s phrase (43), illustrated several articles by other authors and contributed illustrations for several of his own pieces, including his work for *Punch Magazine* and the novel *Vanity Fair*. The latter was quite an undertaking, as it included 187 illustrations (including the wrapper design) (Shillingsburg 139). Working with both wood blocks and steel plates, Thackeray meticulously crafted his illustrations and, as is evident from the text, perhaps found the perfect venue for his type of drawing. With a style that did not rely on overly naturalistic or self-contained images, his illuminative illustrations worked hand in hand with his text to create a complex, multi-layered reading experience and allowed for the poignantly humorous style at which he was so skilled. The mixed-media work of *Vanity Fair* established him as a writer and began his commercial (if not always critical) success. He followed this work with several other novels, including *Pendennis* (1848-50), *Henry Esmond* (1852), *The Newcomes* (1853-55), and *The Virginians* (1857-59), and, in a career choice that connects him to yet another of the authors discussed here, Elizabeth Gaskell, he took on the editorship of *The Cornhill Magazine* in 1860. Working for multiple publications and in various creative roles, Thackeray compiled a professional history that, like *Vanity Fair* itself, is multi-faceted and embodies the same interdisciplinarity that characterizes much of his work, visually and verbally, and distinguishes him from other writers and authors of the period.

The Story of *Vanity Fair*

Though *Vanity Fair* was published in monthly installments from January 1847 to June 1848, it is set in the early part of the century, during a time span twenty to forty years previous to its publication. As John W. Dodds points out in discussing realism and the

novel's subtitle, "A Novel without a Hero," "Thackeray held stubbornly to the conviction that most men are not heroic and that it is the novelist's task to show men as they are" (115). Unlike Dickens's novels, Thackeray's creations do not feature a faultless angel-savior or pure and innocent victim, but rather reflect the reality of a society in which people deceive themselves and, or, others as he challenges and perfects the interpretive skills of his audience via the mixed-media tale of the "unheroic." Kathleen Tillotson explains how Thackeray's style distinguishes him from his contemporaries:

Thackeray turns away, then, from heroes and heroines, from the conventional ending, from the "professional parts of novels." And he evades the contemporary categories: *Vanity Fair* is not a novel of low life (its lowest level is the apartments at Fulham, or—unexpectedly—the elder Sir Pitt's *ménage* in Great Gaunt Street), nor of high life (the highest level is the ball at Gaunt House, which would contain some surprises for the devotees of Mrs. Gore); it is not a military novel, despite Waterloo, nor a domestic novel, despite the number of family scenes. It is not historical, although it is a novel about the past; the period in which it is set is robbed of its usual glamour, and the past is strangely interpenetrated by the present. (72)

Reminiscent of Mrs. Proctor's previously cited letter, Tillotson's summary of the author's style and subject, in which characters rest "so often on a moral borderland" (75), captures the qualities of the story that make it relevant and timeless; the novel's moral and social middle-ground approach compels the reader, in some ways, to view each character as a sort of "everyman" that can be related to contemporary society. Even if these characters—characters who clearly lack the capacity for the kind of evolution Thackeray might hope for his audience—fall short of absolute realism in many ways, they still represent poignant examples for the reader and society. These aspects of Thackeray's work, which distinguish him from his peers even as they reflect various elements of his predecessors, are realized through the interrelation of word (and even at its most basic level, the individual letter) and image as the story of its "non-heroes" unfolds.

The story follows the lives of Amelia Sedley and Becky Sharp, two women whose characters prove a vivid contrast and a literary means ripe for Thackeray's humor and social critique. Becky, the poor but resourceful daughter of a painter and French opera dancer, leaves her girlhood school with her friend Amelia, with whom she will stay before going on to act as governess to the children of Sir Pitt Crawley. Of course, Becky has plans to be stopped from taking up this post by a marriage to Amelia's brother Jos, the rich collector of Boggley Wollah. When her plans fall through, at least in part due to the defamation of her origins by Amelia's fiancée, George Osborne, Becky proceeds to the home of the Crawley family.

Charming the Crawley men, and eventually Sir Pitt's rich sister, Miss Crawley, Becky leaves Sir Pitt for Miss Crawley's home in London. While there, Sir Pitt arrives to propose marriage soon after the death of his wife, and the truth comes out that Becky has already married Sir Pitt's son, Rawdon, the wild soldier upon whom Miss Crawley had intended to bestow her great wealth. Having estranged themselves from the family by this marriage, Becky and Rawdon turn to their talents, charm and gambling respectively, and credit for support. Soon, the English soldiers are called to the continent after Napoleon escapes his island prison, and Becky and Rawdon, along with Amelia, since brought down by her father's failed speculations, and George, now her husband, travel to Brussels to await battle.

While there, Becky wins over the men and alienates the women, including Amelia, who watches as her husband becomes increasingly enamored of Becky's beauty and confidence. The men leave behind their pregnant wives to fight the French, but George, slain at Waterloo, never returns. After social success in Europe, Becky and Rawdon return to

London, where she is not as well received, but where she continues to try and make her way into high society. She wins over her brother-in-law, the younger Pitt Crawley and heir to Miss Crawley's fortune and the Crawley title after the death of Sir Pitt, for a time, and eventually even meets King George in his company. Lord Steyne, another of Becky's powerful but unreliable conquests, forces her on his respectable wife and daughter-in-law, and she truly believes she has arrived, having left her son and husband emotionally and mentally behind long ago due to her social ambition. Things fall apart for Becky when she leaves her husband in prison, where he has been deposited until some of his debts can be paid, overnight but is discovered by Rawdon in the compromising company (and diamonds) of Lord Steyne. Though Rawdon abuses Lord Steyne during this encounter, he is denied the pleasure of a duel and instead grudgingly accepts the island post that Becky has secured him through her intrigue. It is while serving in this position that Rawdon eventually dies from yellow fever. Becky is forced out by society and never meets her husband again, moving instead to Europe in an effort to stay one step ahead of her bad reputation, which inevitably follows wherever she goes.

All this time Amelia suffers the plight of the poor widow, devoted to the memory of her husband, George. She eventually sacrifices herself by giving over her son to the care of his wealthy grandfather, Mr. Osborne, to ensure little Georgey's well being and inheritance. Meanwhile, her husband's friend, Major Dobbin, pines for Amelia from India, utterly devoted to her but pained by her indifference to him. When he receives misinformation that she is to be wed, he rushes back to England along with her brother Jos, whom he meets on the return ship. Though she continues in her undeserved devotion to her dead husband, Amelia is delighted to see Dobbin. Jos also returns, vowing to raise Amelia and her father

(Mrs. Sedley having passed away) from the impoverished condition in which they have been living. They form a comfortable, socially elevated circle, of which Georgey can now more frequently form a part, and after the deaths of Mr. Sedley and Mr. Osborne they decide to travel in Europe. While there they meet up again with Becky, who has fallen lower and lower but still retains her deceptive arts. Becky eventually makes her way back into the lives of Jos and Amelia, but her return proves the breaking point for Dobbin and Amelia. Dobbin leaves Amelia behind to return to military service, but Becky, in a remarkably sensitive gesture, shows Amelia her folly in refusing Dobbin by revealing George's false character and his offer to run away with Becky shortly after his marriage to Amelia. Amelia finally feels free to accept Dobbin's romantic attention, but because she had been missing him dearly before this she has already sent a letter asking him to return. Becky, again in an atypically feeling way though certainly for her own self-service, too, bows out of the domestic situation. Dobbin and Amelia wed and return to England with Georgey and maintain a close relationship with their neighbors Sir Pitt Crawley, Lady Jane, and their children, including Becky's own son, Little Rawdon. Becky, never one to miss an opportunity, keeps her claws in Jos this time, secures herself some inheritance through the insurance she receives after Jos's death, and maintains a degree of popularity among certain circles in England.

None of these characters, including the author and narrator, escapes the censure of the text. Their weaknesses and deception make them alternately dissolute and sympathetic, allow for the sort of instruction at which Thackeray aims, and highlight the relevance of their action and situation to readers of both the Victorian period and today. From a letter to his mother dated July 2, 1847, it is evident that creating an idealized world filled with blameless characters was never his intention: "My object is not to make a perfect character or anything

like it.... What I want is to make a set of people living without God in the world (only that is a cant phrase) greedy pompous mean perfectly self-satisfied for the most part and at ease about their superior virtue” (*Letters* 2: 309). By creating these dynamic scoundrels, Thackeray maintains the attention and interest of the reader while at the same time hinting at their relevance to the rest of society, as he suggests in a later letter to George Henry Lewes dated March 6, 1848: “I am quite aware of the dismal roguery w[hich] goes all through the Vanity Fair story – and God forbid that the world should be like it altogether: though I fear it is more like it than we like to own” (*Letters* 2: 354). Thackeray’s correspondence acknowledges the fictive nature of his subject but also points to the truth that lies within it—a truth that he hopes his readers will learn from by comparing the story’s world with their own. However, he not only appeals to and guides the audience through the extreme examples of his characters and situations; he also provides them with interpretive skills to help them recognize their similarities and approach life and literature with a degree of advantageous skepticism. He achieves this through the strange and intriguing relationship between image and text that the reader experiences when reading the novel. Ultimately it is this very hybridity in both medium and subject that makes the work vital and provocative to today’s audiences as well as to its Victorian readers.

At the time of its serialization, the story received typically mixed reviews, though the majority of responses were positive. In the January 2, 1847, edition of *The Spectator*, the reviewer, though lamenting the serial format (which causes the work and the reviewer to suffer), offers somewhat qualified praise for the style of writing and the illustrations in the first installment:

The manner has much of the humour and nice observation upon society which distinguish this author; and the style has his wonted neatness and point. The

text is interspersed with wood-cuts, sometimes mere scratches, but always with more expression than the Boz order of “illustrations.” (19)

A review of the 1848 Bradbury and Evans edition, published on August 12 in *The Athenæum*, points out that although the novel has faults, “they are not the faults most current in our literature” (795); it then extols the novel and the talents of its author:

Knowledge of life, good humoured satire, penetration into motive, power of characterization, and great truthfulness are qualities in fiction as rare as they are admirable; and no work that has been published for many years past can claim these qualities so largely as ‘Vanity Fair.’ (797)

Meanwhile the reviewer for *The Spectator*, responding to the completion of the novel’s serialized run on July 22, 1848, which allowed the reviewer “to take a more entire view of the production, and to form a more complete judgment of it as a work of art, than was possible in the course of piecemeal publication in monthly numbers” (709), returns to commenting on the illustrations and their contribution to the text:

As is usual with works of fiction published periodically, *Vanity Fair* is profusely illustrated with wood-cuts and etchings representing the persons and incidents of the text, by Mr. Thackeray himself. If only of passable or average merit, they would be creditable, as arguing the possession of a double art; but they strike us as exhibiting powers akin to the literary abilities of the author, besides possessing this further quality: the spirit of the scene and the character—the idiosyncrasy of the persons—is more thoroughly entered into and presented to the reader than is common with professional artists. ([Rintoul] 710)

This insightful review provides a compelling glimpse of the intricate relationship between the illustrations and the text they accompany, as it delineates the impact of these on the reader, whose experience and understanding are enriched by their presence and this verbal-visual dynamic.

Given the length, complexity, and time between the monthly installments of the story, Thackeray wrote with the dual pressure of having to keep readers interested while helping

them remember the action of previous installments. He partly achieves these goals through flashbacks and narrative devices that remind the audience of earlier events. These loops in time contribute to the back-and-forth atmosphere of the text, in regard to chronology and the narrative-reader dynamic, as we move in close to the characters, step back from them with the narrator who speaks to us, and then move back in again to focus on the actions and feelings of Becky, Amelia, and the individuals who surround them. Of course, the illustrations contribute to this atmosphere as well, as they help guide the readers from installment to installment, demanding audience interest and attention. Because Thackeray created his own illustrations as “candles” or illuminations (Thackeray 2), they function in ways that differ from the illustrations created by a second party, like those discussed here in the chapters that follow. At times, for example, Thackeray’s depiction of Becky, with her deviously sharp and leering features, undercuts her dainty, beautiful description in the text and her appearance to other characters (typically men) (Fig. 1.1). In this way the image contradicts the text and reminds us of her true nature and motives, even if other characters remain blind to them. Like other illustrations, then, these serve as a key, or guide, to the reader-viewer, but they often do so not through visually reinforcing the text but by exposing the truth that is hidden to other actors in the novel—a liberty the author-illustrator possesses, given his knowledge of the text and its goals, but that the second-party illustrator lacks. This dynamic results in a verbal-visual experience that, in the words of David Skilton, “tip[s] the balance of interpretation significantly towards self-consciousness” (313) on the part of the reader. To gain greater insight regarding the function of these images with Thackeray’s text, we must look to other, more specific, examples from the work itself.



Fig. 1.1. William Makepeace Thackeray, “Mr. Joseph Entangled” for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 4 (1847-48).

Analysis of Illustrations

In her essay “Thackeray’s Best Illustrator,” Patricia Runk Sweeney points out the impact and timelessness of Thackeray’s illustrations for *Vanity Fair*:

[H]is conception of his own characters has been engraved upon the imaginations of generations of readers, for whom his “pen and pencil sketches of English society” combine to create an unequalled portrait of the early Victorian period. (83)

While Sweeney fittingly acknowledges the sense of Thackeray’s social and historical context conveyed in his enduring illustrations and the appeal of his character visualizations, she does not account for the effects of these on the reading experience and the frequent interpretive

challenge they pose for the audience. I devote my analysis of *Vanity Fair* and its illustrations to exploring these crucial and intriguing elements.

Vanity Fair includes three different types of images: full-page, steel-plate designs that tend to act more as visual translations of text and action; smaller woodcuts strategically dropped into the text; and capital illuminations beginning each chapter (except for Chapter 8, which begins with a letter from Becky to Amelia and includes a smaller image above it but not a decorated capital, perhaps because these illuminated letters indicate passage through the narrator's voice and perspective and so would not apply to this epistolary section). The latter two types of illustration, unlike the full-page designs, typically function more satirically and are often difficult to connect directly to textual content. Each of these visual elements, however, contributes to what Christopher Coates identifies as "*Vanity Fair's* dual text" (39). In fact, while almost all illustrations require their own sort of "reading" on the part of the audience, Thackeray's illustrations require reading AND translation and often demand the reader-viewer struggle in the process so that the act of interpretation becomes, in many ways, the subject itself—something reinforced in the text as characters *misread* individuals and suffer the consequences of their faulty interpretation and resultant understanding. In this section I will consider each of these elements as I look first to some of the illuminated capitals, examining both content and image framing, that begin the chapters, as well as to how the author himself enters, explicitly and implicitly, into the novel through these illustrations. By considering these select illustrations we will better understand the many levels, both visual and verbal, on which Thackeray's work operates, as well as the extent to which he practices his authorial control and draws reader attention to the acts of reading and interpretation.

Illuminated Capitals: The Letter-Image Dynamic

One cannot help but be struck by the detail and purposefulness, sometimes humorous, sometimes confusing, of the illuminated capitals that set off the novel's chapters. This visual device was not entirely novel, for, as Tucker points out, the 1840s (the time of the novel's publication), marked a "radiant moment" for the "vignette initial capital," "when Gothic revival and the Oxford Movement, Chartism and free-trade liberalism, educational reformism, Isaac Pitman's phonetic shorthand, and a new ferment in typographic forms all synergistically impinged on Victorian cultural literacy" (169). However, Thackeray's skillful manipulation of the technique as a means to demonstrate and comment on both society and the medium in which he worked certainly sets him apart. In her essay "Thackeray's Pictorial Capitals," Joan Stevens emphasizes the moral-satirical nature of Thackeray's capital images as she considers the illustrations in *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, *The Virginians*, *Lovel*, and *Philip*. Though I agree with her analysis regarding the role of these images as foreshadowing and commenting on text, she fails to address the significance of the reader's efforts at interpretation and elucidation as important in and of themselves and as potential goals of the author and his mixed-media text. In my more focused study of the relationship between image and text and how these impact the reading experience, I try to deal with both of these issues. By exploring the effect of individual illustrations I also suggest how this act participates in Thackeray's instructive vision and comment on the very nature of the author-reader dynamic.

Some of the most remarkable capitals are those that can barely be distinguished from the images that surround them. Whether because of their small size amid the illustrated scene in which they appear, or because they feature as part of the landscape or action, the

reader frequently struggles, at least for a moment, to identify the letter in the image. In this way Thackeray again reinforces the potential for dissimulation in the novel (and in the world around us) as well as the importance of correctly interpreting the hidden signifiers.

A few of these capital images are more image than capital and so compel the viewer not only to interpret the image appearing with the letter but first to search for the letter itself. The intricate relationship between image and text here is reinforced as the reader uses the second part of the word that follows this capital to guess what the starting letter must be. The capital and image that begin Chapter 29, “Brussels,” demonstrate this interplay of word and image (Fig. 1.2). The letter “M” in the top right of the image, which shows the comical Mrs. O’Dowd and her “famous yellow turban, with the bird of paradise” (303),⁹ is not only rather diminutive in relation to the rest of the image but blends in with the image organically,



Fig. 1.2. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *M* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 29 (1847-48).

as part of the curtain over her opera box. Mrs. O’Dowd, an endearing yet ridiculous character, seen here as others (including Becky as described in the chapter) look upon her, serves as the focus of this illumination. The letter simply contributes to the scene and

⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, all page references are taken from the Oxford World’s Classics edition of the novel (1998), which reproduces George Saintsbury’s 1908 edition, edited and with introduction by John Sutherland.

requires the interpretive efforts of the reader to tie the image to the text, linguistically with the chapter's first word and narratively in relation to the chapter's trajectory.

Another example of this interpretive demand occurs at the beginning of Chapter 38, "A Family in a Very Small Way." In this treacly sentimental image, depicting a young girl and boy framed by an overlarge umbrella shielding them from the torrential rain blowing across the scene, the "W" that begins the first word, "We," in the chapter not only appears very small in relation to the rest of the image, but also sits a significant distance below the "e" that goes with it (Fig. 1.3). Instead, it appears on a level with the faces of the two children, drawing our attention away from the text and to this central perspective in the illumination. Interestingly, by compelling us to focus on the illustration, this positioning of

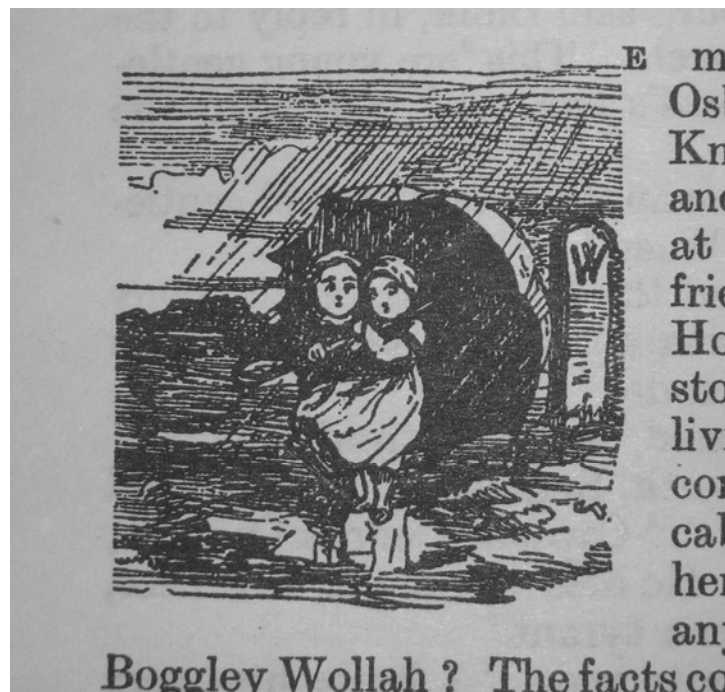


Fig. 1.3. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *W* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 38 (1847-48).

the letter suggests the recurring function of the images as undercutting textual content to expose the hypocrisy, self-deceit, and pretense of the novel's action and characters, even when these things remain hidden to those affected by them. For example, the tone of the

image, with its overly sentimental subject, conflicts with the unsentimental tone of much of the novel—something reinforced by the very incongruity of the image’s content, which does not relate directly to anything in the chapter. The sorrow of the children and their efforts to hide from the storm could refer to the suffering of the widowed Amelia, impoverished with her parents and clinging to the memory of her dead husband. However, the ways in which this image do not fit with the style and content make readers suspicious and compel them to keep in mind George’s selfishness and inconstancy, qualities Amelia either does not see or more likely refuses to acknowledge. Similarly, the sadness of the scene and the “W” depicted on a sort of headstone call to mind Mr. Sedley’s social fall and multiple failed enterprises, undercutting his hope and expectation by the reader’s awareness of his inevitable disappointment and ultimate death. Even Amelia’s learning of Dobbin’s supposed engagement from his sister ties in with this duality of false belief and narrator/reader omniscience as she pretends not to care and perpetuates her cycle of self-denial and self-deceit. By setting off the beginning of the chapter with an image that conflicts with the novel’s tone and even content and by subjugating the letter to the illustration, Thackeray compels the audience to proceed cautiously and underscores the need to question in the exercise of interpretation.

The capital illustration and diminutive size of the letter it surrounds in Chapter 61, “In Which Two Lights Are Put Out,” further promotes this verbal-visual dynamic (Fig. 1.4). Again the first letter, here a “T” that begins the word “There,” appears far below the “here” and draws our eye to the center line of the illustration and the image as a whole. This manipulation of the text-image relationship and the continual movement in and out of the story’s action are reinforced by this positioning and by the visual reminders of the characters’

temporality and the narrator's management of these elements. An example of this symbolic device and the narrator's handling of his subjects is the doll¹⁰ strewn across the mantelpiece, which in its collapsed pose also alludes to the coming deaths of Mr. Sedley and Mr. Osborne referred to in the chapter's title. The crooked kettle over the coals and the tumbled, empty slippers in front of the fireplace also foreshadow the breakdown of home and hearth that can come with the death of fathers, but then these men were not ideal fathers, for one became a broken, helpless dependent and the other ruled as a heartless tyrant. This incongruous relation, between the sad image of a disheveled and disrupted hearth and the reality of these

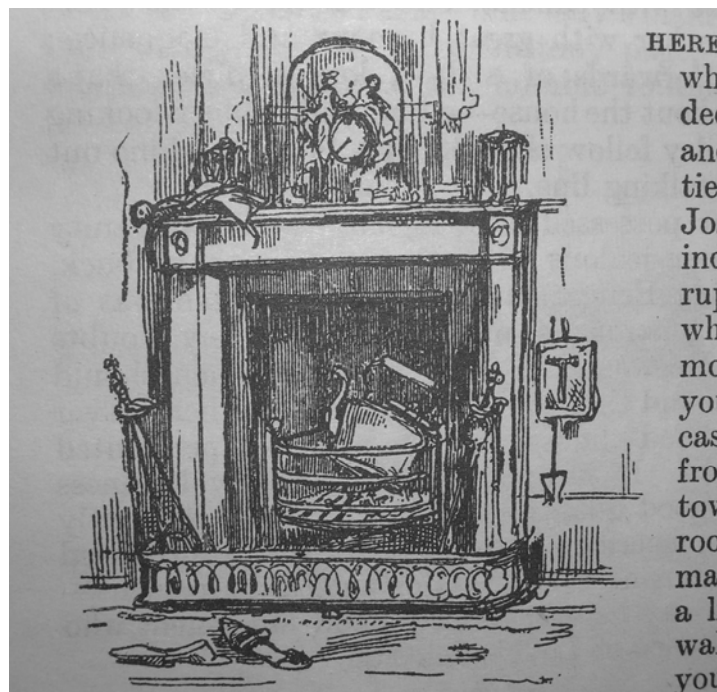


Fig. 1.4. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *T* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 61 (1847-48).

self-absorbed men, contributes to this role of the images as at times undercutting and at times reinforcing the story's content. The clock on the mantelpiece, which calls to mind the clock depicting the sacrifice of Iphigenia that frequently appears in episodes set in Mr. Osborne's

¹⁰ Although Thackeray supposedly got the idea for the "puppet" device, which led to the frame for the novel that he actually wrote last, from Torrens McCullagh, this illustration with its doll-figure suggests that Thackeray may have already been thinking of at least a similar device to echo the creative control and manipulation of the author-artist. See Eyre Crowe's description of the episode between McCullagh and Thackeray in *Thackeray's Haunts and Homes* (55-56) or Gordon N. Ray's edition of Thackeray's letters (2: 392, n130).

home¹¹, also directs the reader to resist over-sentimentalizing characters and events. The subject of Mr. Osborne's clock echoed here reminds the reader of his willingness to sacrifice his children's desires to his own social and financial ambitions and the hypocrisy that allows him to benefit from Mr. Sedley's successes yet abandon and put him down in his failures. Even in the face of his death, then, we confront the truth of his nature represented in this image so that his final, feeble, and incomplete gestures of reconciliation toward Amelia seem suspect and certainly long overdue. This capital image, then, reflects and revises the text so that even the symbol of the hearth remains complicated and fragile, much like the variable realities characters (and even their audience) construct for themselves.

Other capital illustrations also require viewers to search them out because the letters are embedded within the images and blend in with the scenes they depict. An early example of this occurs at the start of Chapter 7, "Crawley of Queen's Crawley," which begins with one of the narrator's background stories, this one telling the history behind Queen's Crawley itself. The small illustration depicts this historic episode when Queen Elizabeth enjoyed a mug of Hampshire beer given her by "the Crawley of the day" (Fig. 1.5); she liked it so well that she "erected Crawley into a borough to send two members to Parliament," resulting in the re-naming of the place as Queen's Crawley (76). In this comical scene we see a portly queen chugging her brew while an ancestral Crawley bears a tray from his kneeling position at her feet. The reader-viewer looks to this image to find the first letter of the text, here an "A" drawn as the pulled-back window curtains in the future Queen's Crawley. The incorporation of this letter into the illustration not only bespeaks the intricate relationship between image and text in Thackeray's work but requires the reader to examine the image

¹¹ For a discussion of "The Iphigenia Scene" and the "Iphigenia allusion" see "*Vanity Fair: The Art of Improvisation*" in J. A. Sutherland's *Thackeray at Work*.

and in so doing acknowledge its significance. The image to which we direct our attention, with its comical portrayal of this most royal personage and her titled toady, exposes the ridiculous source of Sir Pitt Crawley's "honor." Readers see, even if others do not, that his social and political position, so envied and respected by other characters, originated in this silly liquid transaction. Though tradesmen like Mr. Osborne, with their selfish ambitions and



Fig. 1.5. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter A for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 7 (1847-48).

social aspirations at times seem absurd, through this illustration the audience realizes that those of even higher status are, in their own ways, no less (and perhaps more) ridiculous, given the source of their insubstantial honors. Thackeray persists in needling and exposing his subjects from every angle, undercutting the pretentiousness and false (though widely accepted, even at times by the narrator and, presumably, by the reader) realities of the novel's characters.

Chapter 12 (“Quite a Sentimental Chapter”) similarly incorporates the first letter of the chapter into the illustration. In this case, the letter, a “W,” appears naturalistically as the crisscross of leafless, limbless trees situated behind a young, romantic couple (Fig. 1.6). The translation of the letter in this way makes it function not only linguistically but symbolically, as it represents the pastoral scene that the audience leaves behind on the path to London, indicated by the marker on the ground behind the couple and the direction of the young man’s gesture. It also contributes to the content of the first line of the chapter as it reflects

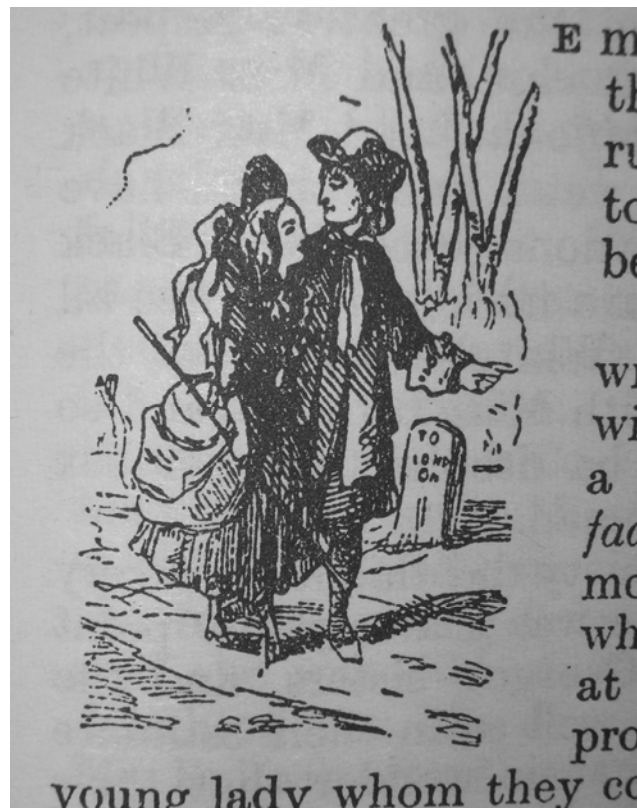


Fig. 1.6. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter W for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 12 (1847-48).

the subject and physically stands in the image to represent that which we leave behind: “We must now take leave of Arcadia, and those amiable people practising the rural virtues there, and travel back to London, to inquire what has become of Miss Amelia” (131). There could be no description less accurate to represent the crude and unkempt home of Sir Pitt Crawley and the less-than-innocent Becky and Rawdon, upon whom the preceding chapter closes. In

fact, the subject of Miss Amelia, who is to follow, even in her cloyingly soft and sentimental ways, represents more of Arcadia than these others. This tongue-in-cheek directive we receive from the narrator works hand in hand with the illustration, just as the first word—part picture, part text—indicates. Having had to move in and out and back and forth in time, perspective, and sympathy, the reader has come to expect seeming inconsistency and so approaches the narrator’s informing the audience of this journey away from Arcadia and the chapter title, “Quite a Sentimental Chapter,” with a degree of skepticism: we are not entirely surprised when the narrative does not really move away from the sentimental, as the first line suggests. This implied but unrealized movement leaves the reader again in suspense, struggling to perceive correctly and to determine with reading the true direction of the plot, either away from false Arcadia toward the “real one” with Amelia, or simply toward yet another aspect of these characters’ less-than-ideal loves and lives. Judging from the previous chapters, the latter possibility seems the most likely.

One of the most intriguing examples of Thackeray’s tying the first letter of a chapter into the opening illustration features at the beginning of Chapter 18, “Who Played on the Piano Captain Dobbin Bought?” The image depicts Napoleon, a personage frequently linked visually and textually with Becky, looking down on a bowing Harlequin figure, a recurring character in Thackeray’s illustrations often aligned with the narrator and performance elements of the novel and its frame (Fig. 1.7). The Napoleon/Becky-Harlequin/narrator juxtaposition emphasizes the intra- and extra-textual machinations and manipulations inherent in both the novel format and society. At the same time, this clown figure appears on unnaturally elongated arms made to match the length of his legs, giving the impression of a four-footed animal and possibly calling to mind the four legs of the British cavalry preparing

for battle with Napoleon's army. Thackeray further foreshadows the coming deployment of some of the novel's main characters, including George, Dobbin, and Rawdon, by using the first letter of the chapter, "O," as a window looking out on two soldiers, armed and in full regalia. The juxtaposition of these elements as possible symbols of the British work to



Fig. 1.7. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *O* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 18 (1847-48).

develop the duality that has persisted throughout the text, in this case the critical, entertaining, and humorous Harlequin set against the supposedly serious, diligent soldier, eager for honor. However, in the novel we see that even these soldiers frequently fall short of such noble sentiments, as talk of buying rank and post frequently enter the text. Nothing is straightforward, and this image, like the text itself, conveys this. Interestingly, though, the window in the scene could also be viewed as a mirror reflecting the readers retreating from this image, armed with the signs it conveys and ready to engage with the text that follows. Thackeray reminds us that ultimately he is showing us ourselves and that, as he states in the

Preface, the Manager sits on the stage and looks out into the Fair, or audience, so that while the actors form the subject, we know that those there to watch are watched themselves. At the same time, those of us watching “with a *reflective* turn of mind, walking through an exhibition of this sort” can see what lies before us in the novel and acknowledge its application for our own lives and society (1; italics mine).

The capital image introducing Chapter 17, “How Captain Dobbin Bought a Piano,” includes the first letter as part of a framed scene. While those capital images in which the letter itself forms the frame, which I will discuss in the following section, allude to the objectification of the subject under the gaze of the viewer and the control of the author, this “pictorial capital,” to use Stevens’ phrase, alludes to Becky’s materialism and efforts to acquire first Jos and then the painting. Though she fails in the first of these pursuits when George, and Jos’s own drunken indiscretions, scare her “suitor” away, she succeeds in the second. The letter “I” that begins the chapter almost disappears at the inner edge of the frame, while an auction tag appears at the top of the opposite side (Fig. 1.8). The text reveals that the painting, lot “No. 369,” is a “[p]ortrait of a gentleman on an elephant” (202). This comical image, and the elephant itself, recur in the story in mocking references to the large, pretentious, yet cowardly Jos, and Becky, in attendance at the auction of the Sedleys’ goods with her husband, seizes the opportunity to acquire that which she failed to secure previously. In fact, she seems to prefer the terms on which she finally takes possession of this “Jos,” feeling the satisfaction of trading in her chance to marry into a tradesman’s family for the more preferable union with a gentleman’s family. This juxtaposition between the real Jos and the two-dimensional one is reinforced by the auctioneer’s own words: “Who’ll bid for the gentleman on the elephant?” Not only does Becky leave with the painting, but she has

the pleasant revenge of having “knocked down” the portrait “for half a guinea” (202).

Enclosing the capital image within the borders of the frame emphasizes its materiality and



Fig. 1.8. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *I* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 17 (1847-48).

Becky’s pursuit and attainment of first Jos’s image and eventually Jos himself, whom she also “knocks down” in the end, so that he finally cries to Dobbin, “You don’t know what a terrible woman she is” (874). Ironically, Becky makes use of that same portrait, which she cleverly displays as one of her most precious possessions, to snare Jos for good, informing him, “I have never parted with that picture—I never will” (861). Given the way things turn out for poor, foolish Jos and his manipulative companion, these words take on a rather sinister tone. As in the rest of Thackeray’s text (both visual and verbal), we see here that nothing is ever straightforward—for us or for the characters—and the audience must come to expect such duality of form and meaning.

Illuminated Capitals: Image Framing

The framing of several of these opening images, in which letters frequently form the borders of the illustration, also impacts the reading-seeing experience in interesting ways as it reminds the audience of the author as artist and the management and machinations of the narrator. Thackeray includes one of these framed images at the beginning of Chapter 15, “In Which Rebecca’s Husband Appears for a Short Time.” The rounded outer arms of the “E” that begins the chapter surround a picture of a figure representing Becky, on her knees and in tears after having to refuse Sir Pitt Crawley’s proposal of marriage (Fig. 1.9). This follows the final scene in the preceding chapter describing Sir Pitt’s proposal, which the narrator later likens to Love kneeling before Beauty (illustrated by Thackeray in the previous chapter). Certainly the image of a crude and unattractive Sir Pitt kneeling at the feet of the deceptive Becky falls short of this ideal, but the quick reversal of their positions in the text presents a no less preposterous image. Thackeray heightens the satire of this textual picture with the aid of this first illustration. The frame surrounding it resembles the binding of a book, with the middle arm of the “E” functioning as a sort of hinge at the center. This, along with the demonic image of the great manipulator of these tales hovering over its edge, reinforces the fictive nature of the scene and compels the viewer to evaluate the episode and the novel with this in mind.

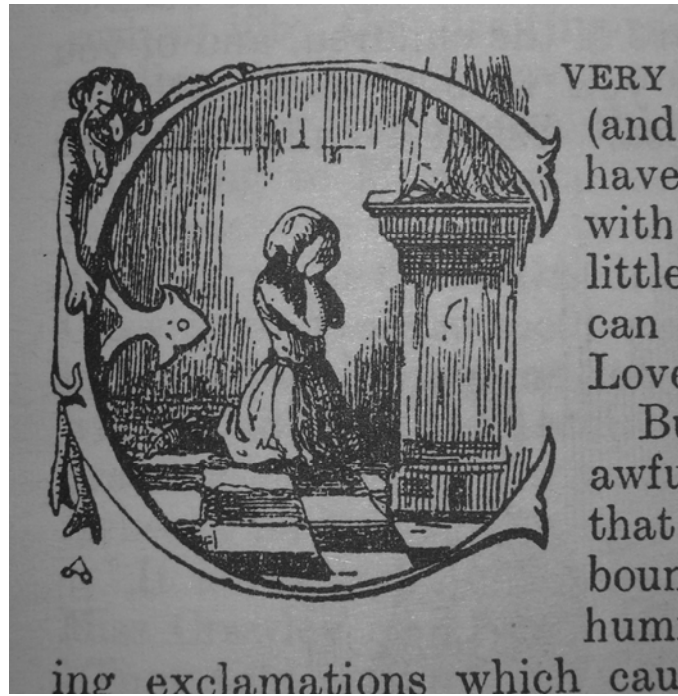


Fig. 1.9. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *E* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 15 (1847-48).

Becky's sincerity continues to be suspect, and even here we know that her crying "some of the most genuine tears that ever fell from her eyes" (178) results from her losing the chance at becoming Lady Crawley and not from her sorrow at causing Sir Pitt pain. The statue at which the figure, described by Harvey as "apparently a boy in medieval costume" (87) but clearly suggesting a tearful Becky, kneels functions as an ironic contrast between performance and reality, reflecting the text in which Love, or Sir Pitt, falls far short of the elevated statuesque form. This juxtaposition emphasizes that Becky merely performs sympathy for Sir Pitt and in reality cries not for Sir Pitt the man but for the stone idol symbolizing what he and his name would mean to her. As Judith L. Fisher points out, Becky, like several other female characters from Thackeray's novels, "are all actresses, more or less self-defined as such" (135).¹² The image here, then, directs the reader to judge her

¹² For a further discussion of Thackeray's depiction of his characters as reflecting "the tensions between acting and feeling, acting and being," as well as the influence of Goethe's *Elective Affinities* on this, see Martin Meisel's chapter "The Paradox of the Comedian: Thackeray and Goethe" in *Realizations* (322).

tears as the performance they are and to look below this surface to see her true motives and very unromantic aspirations.

Two other introductory images reinforce the spectator role of the readers and their experience of the characters as objects of the gaze by setting them off almost as portraits. The first of these, appearing at the beginning of Chapter 25, “In Which All the Principal Personages Think Fit to Leave Brighton,” exemplifies this linguistic portraiture. The large “C” surrounds what is likely a picture of the recently married Amelia, on honeymoon with George in Brighton (Fig. 1.10). It pushes readers to connect with and prepare for the touching experiences of the characters, evidenced here in the sad expression of the lady worried for her soldier-husband, yet compels them to resist this excessive sentimentality, given the suspicion the narrator continually instills in the audience by exposing some of the



Fig. 1.10. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *C* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 25 (1847-48).

characters’ (including his own) flaws. In regard to Amelia, we see this in her cruel indifference toward Dobbin and her shortsightedness regarding both Dobbin and her own husband, George. Similarly, a later image depicting a post-dinner Jos lounging in a chair and

framed by the “O” that begins Chapter 26, “Between London and Chatham,” functions as a sort of portrait (Fig. 1.11). Jos, a character who spends his life posing as if for a painting, favors bright, extravagant dress and airs over real substance, so that in many ways Jos in portrait echoes the Jos as pure portrait we see in the text. Here the image demonstrates not only Thackeray’s creative act but Jos’s shallow character as a product of his own artifice.

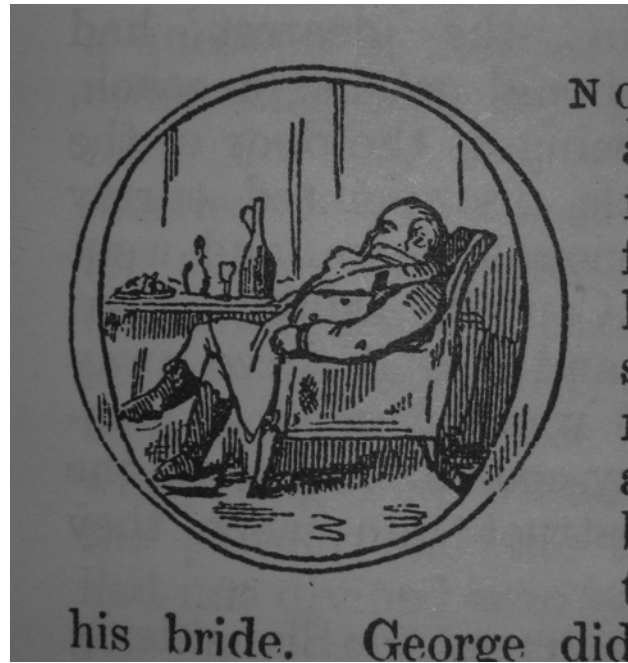


Fig. 1.11. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter O for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 26 (1847-48).

The Narrator “Dropped In”: Visual Realizations of the Narrative Presence

Thackeray has been compared to those 18th-century authors, particularly Fielding, whose narrators are often seen and felt in the text. Describing events one minute and commenting on them in the next, these intrusive narrators form a bridge between the reader and the subject as they mediate and interpret the text. Certainly Thackeray’s narrator participates in these in-and-out movements, but while he may be omniscient he is by no means faultless—and he even falls under some of the same scrutiny as his subjects. Now and then, the audience is reminded that the narrator is recounting episodes told to him by others,

that he is a real character who has supped with other characters and witnessed them firsthand. However, at other times we have a sense of his unnatural knowledge—knowledge that allows him to describe the inner workings of families and characters. As artificial as this persona might seem, it provides the opportunities for satire and social critique that other narrative structures do not.¹³ The illustrations, too, particularly the capital illustrations, reflect this dynamic but function in this way even more uniformly and explicitly than the narrator of the story and the text itself. These images act as physical representations or reminders of the narrator's (and occasionally the author's) presence and machinations as well as of the “puppet” role of the characters who are his (and our) subject. Just like the other characters in the novel, neither the narrator nor Thackeray himself escapes censure, for, as Thackeray writes to his mother in the July 2, 1847, letter cited above, following his description of Amelia and the loving nature that will prove her savior, he, too, needs salvation: “Save me, save me too O my God and Father, cleanse my heart and teach me my duty” (*Letters* 2: 309). Luckily for his reading audiences, Thackeray chose to work out his salvation by writing and in the visual-verbal space of the novel.

The clown figures that feature in the novel's monthly wrapper design and in the title page of the first edition, published by Bradbury and Evans in 1848, frequently arouse criticism aligning the author and this recurring “character.” We have seen the mirror function as a visual device in Thackeray's preface and the sample pictorial capital above (Fig. 1.7), suggesting that this is a novel intended to reveal things about not only the characters but the readers AND the master “puppeteer” as well. The speaker standing above the crowds in the wrapper design possesses the same donkey ears as the crowd he addresses

¹³ For a discussion of the authorial Thackeray versus Thackeray the man set against the historical context of previous writers in several of Thackeray's novels, including *Vanity Fair*, see “The Content of the Authorial ‘I’” by Geoffrey Tillotson in *Thackeray the Novelist*.

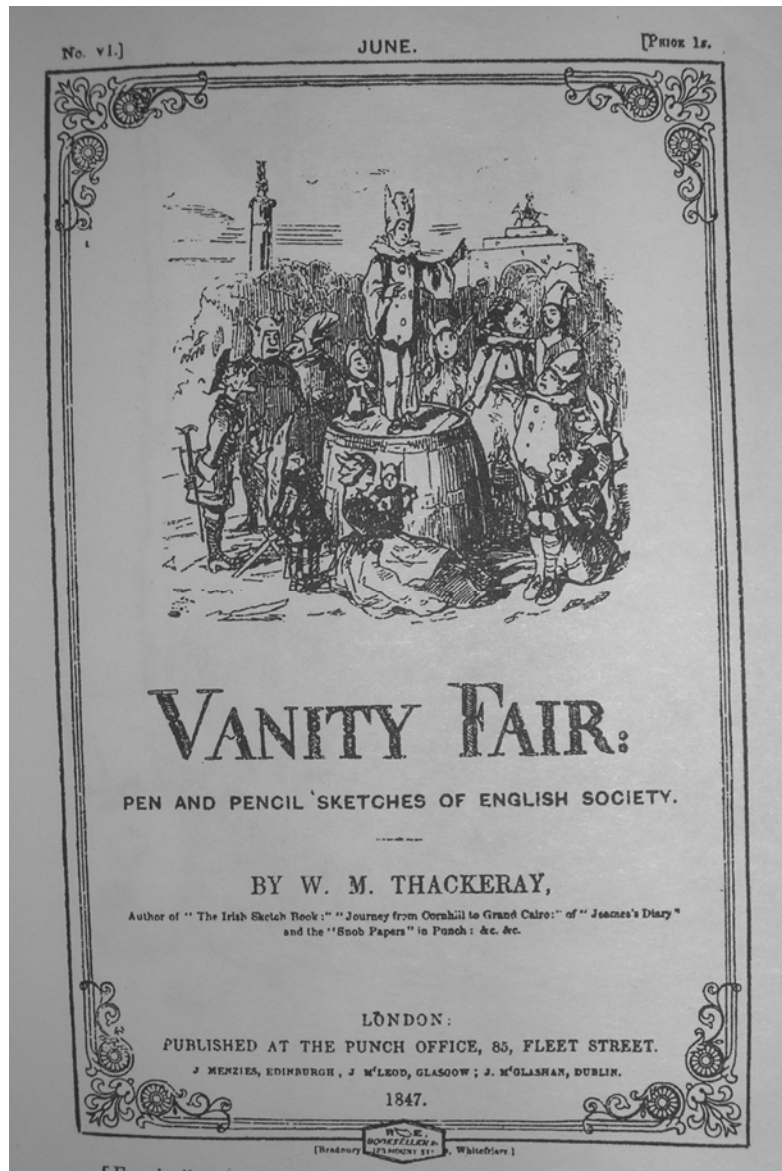


Fig. 1.12. William Makepeace Thackeray, monthly wrapper for *Vanity Fair*, (1847-48).

(Fig. 1.12), and the sad-faced figure on the title page holds the mirror up to himself (though interestingly it appears at a slight angle so that we, too, can examine his reflection with him) (Fig. 1.13). The association between the clown/Harlequin/puppet-master figure and Thackeray himself justly arises from these first images, the author's preface (in which he introduces himself as "the Manager of the Performance"), and the narrator of the story (whose positioning as mediator between the other characters and the reader echoes the

author's own sort of intermediary, though manipulative, role). The link between novelist and these figures also arises—perhaps most compellingly—from the incorporation of a

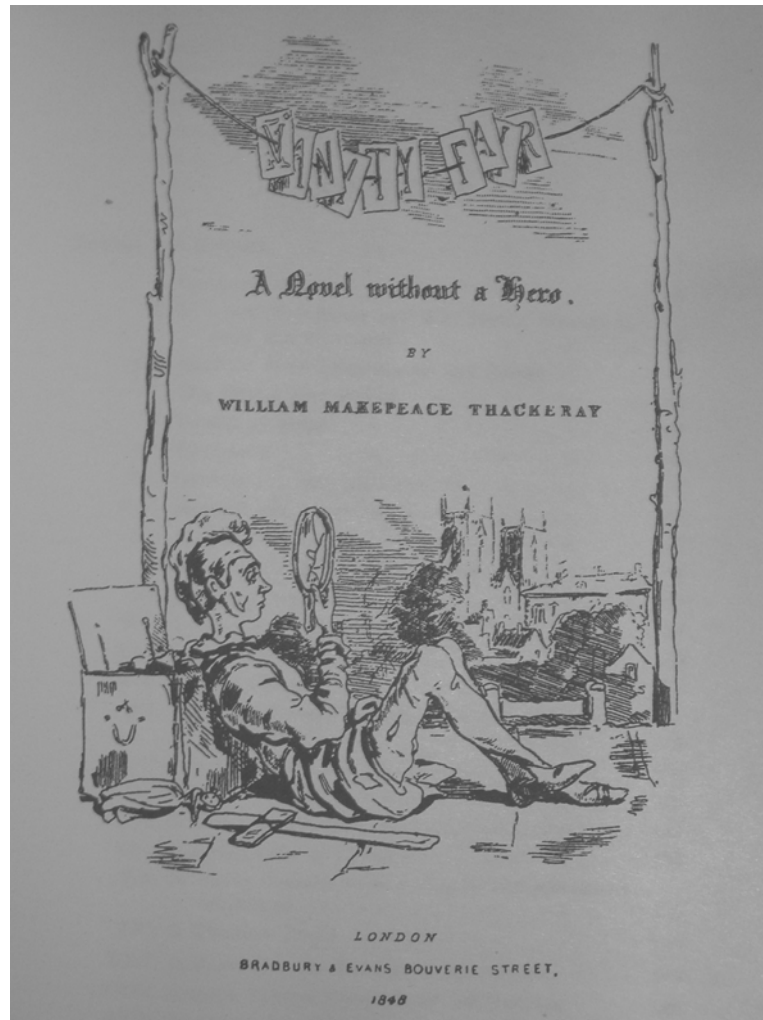


Fig. 1.13. William Makepeace Thackeray, title page for *Vanity Fair*, London: Bradbury and Evans, 1848.

caricatured self-portrait by the author at the end of Chapter 9 (Fig. 1.14). This most explicit reference to Thackeray's involvement in the novel highlights his presence and participation as he withdraws the mask that covered his face, setting aside for a moment the face of the theatrical entertainer to show the reader his true self—a self who, like the reader and the novel's characters, appears somewhat childlike and prone to at least a degree of the same confusion. Through this revealing image, he not only reminds the audience of his presence and masterful control but visually realizes the purpose of the entire work: to “unmask” his

characters and society by exposing their many foibles, a treatment that we see neither the author nor the reader can ultimately escape.



Fig. 1.14. William Makepeace Thackeray, self-portrait as narrator for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 9 (1847-48).

However, the “mask”—for Thackeray and the text—quickly reappears in the capital illustration for Chapter 10, “Miss Sharp Begins to Make Friends,” on the adjacent page. This picture includes an image representative of some of the most complex and metaphorical illustrations (Fig. 1.15). The juxtaposition of the two illustrations seemingly suggests that the mask of the Thackeray caricature falls for but a moment before being raised again for the following image that, in many ways, represents a variation on the same theme. The reader could easily interpret the main figure in the image as a translation of the clown/speaker from the wrapper design; bearing the similar donkey ears combined with an unnaturally elongated, though still strangely human, face, the figure reminds the audience of the original visual realization of this character. Here, though, the figure has grown dramatically in scale so that the tiny figures, representing the other characters as well as the reading audience, mill around the base of this statuesque figure like tiny ants. These proportions reinforce that the author is the “manager” of the story, a role reinforced all the more by his wielding a staff from which

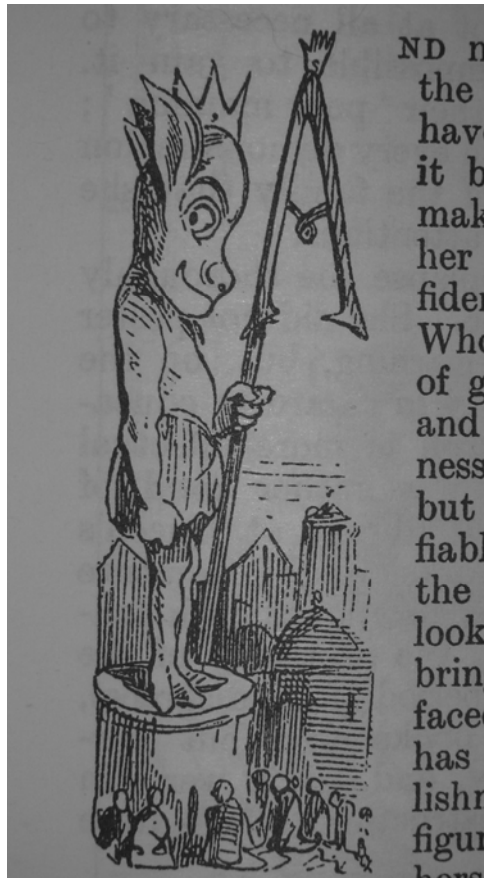


Fig. 1.15. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter A for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 10 (1847-48).

the first letter of the chapter, an “A,” extends. Not only do we understand this figure as lording over and directing the diminutive people that surround him, but he controls the language that shapes and creates them, here represented by a single letter. However, even this director figure, as his exaggerated ears and facial features suggest, cannot escape the folly he assigns these others—something that relates the subject matter to the author and so to the world of the reader as well as to the novel’s narrator, a sort of master within the story.

Two other capital images similarly assign this creative, albeit qualified and mildly suspect, power to a figure redolent of the author. The first of these, appearing at the beginning of Chapter 6 (“Vauxhall”), represents the author’s creative medium through the symbol of a sister art, in this case music. The image shows a man playing a tune on his pipe, echoing the author’s creation and performance of the story, to the dog at his feet, who reflects

the role of the reader taking in this novelistic utterance (Fig. 1.16). Though presenting the reader as a listening dog in this symbolic equation may at first seem a biased and unjust



Fig. 1.16. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *I* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 6 (1847-48).

critique, the comical piper, with long nose (exaggerating Thackeray's own physiognomy) and enlarged head, does not escape censure. Given this association between author and image, the large "I" that serves as the subject of the opening sentence (along with the "know" that follows) in Chapter 6 takes on even greater significance and relevance for this caricaturist self-portrait. Another reflection on this authorial omniscience and self-representation occurs when the clown figure returns in the pictorial capital for Chapter 37, "The Subject Continued." Connected with the author through these preceding images, the representation of the entertainer, here dramatically posturing for the reader, once again visually conveys his role and presence in the story (Fig. 1.17). Yet again, though, he suffers from the same humorously mocking appearance and biting criticism, for the theatrical and

self-important affectation evident in the figure's performative pose alludes to the author as well as to the social feats of the novel's characters, most impressively those of Becky Sharp. However, the scene also reminds the audience that the performer controls the story, represented here by the letter he balances on his nose. Once again, the relevance of this letter he displays, an "I," proves important for the text that follows but also for what it tells the reader about the author's influence on (and in) the story. Though rarely evident in the text, in the images, most frequently these initial illuminations, creative and created worlds can safely come together and, as we have seen in previous examples, the author can comment on his subjects (and himself) more openly through the use of visual symbol and metaphor.



Fig. 1.17. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *I* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 37 (1847-48).

The creative authority of the author comes across to the reader more implicitly through the relation between the letters of these pictorial images and the characters that appear with them. While the foregoing examples show figures controlling the letters in their

scenes, other examples demonstrate the mastery of letters over their characters. Rather than figures controlling the letters, the letters seem to control them as characters find themselves carried along by these linguistic giants. Some of these letters are absurd and quite comical in their overtly exaggerated incorporation as they participate in the scene but entirely retain their obvious appearance as letters. An early example of this occurs with the letter “P” at the beginning of Chapter 4, “The Green Silk Purse.” The letter clearly dominates the scene as it serves to hold a diminutive Becky, metaphorically fishing not for the fish pictured but for the man, in this case Jos, and the social position she craves (Fig. 1.18). The scene foreshadows her efforts to catch him that will develop within the chapter as it reflects the title of the chapter and the green purse she uses to try to ensnare him, both by hinting that it will be for Jos and by drawing him into helping her make it so that “his hands [were] bound in a web of green silk, which she was unwinding” (47). The illustration depicting this later moment in the chapter (Fig. 1.1) combined with the capital illustration beginning the section form what

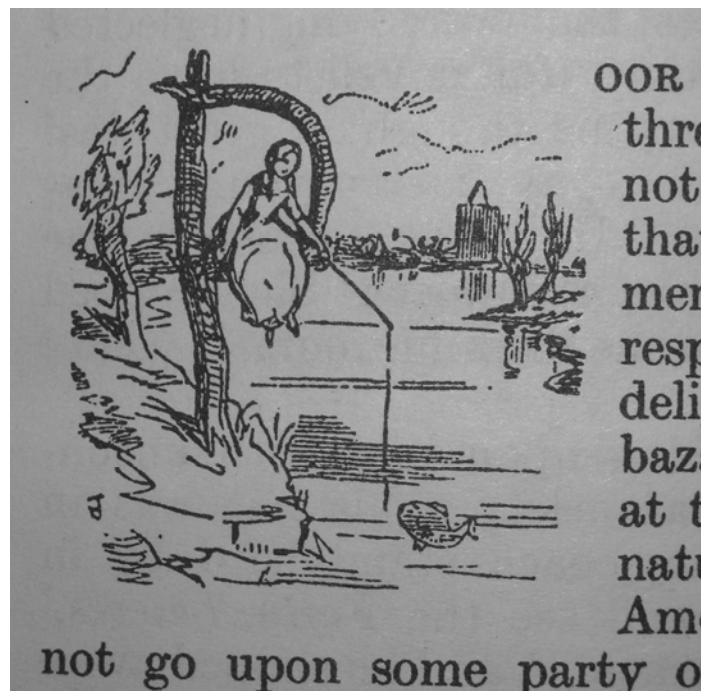


Fig. 1.18. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *P* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 4 (1847-48).

Victor R. Kennedy describes as a “thematic pair” (139). Things continue to work on these various levels of reading and seeing, word and imagery, as even this final textual image creates a picture that symbolizes her emotional entrapment of the eager collector of Boggley Wollah. The initial image, though, also serves to echo the layers of seeming as Becky, with her crafty artifice and hidden scheming, and the “P,” appearing to be like a tree but really quite unnatural, appear set off by a more natural, almost pastoral backdrop. Becky, framed by this linguistic imitation of a tree, attempts to fit in, but the reader knows here and later in the chapter, as she exercises her craft so cleverly that even Mrs. Sedley describes her as being “all heart” (33), that it is all performance. However, the juxtaposition of Becky and the letter also reflects the text itself and the fact that even she, a masterful manipulator, is shaped and controlled by language which, in turn, is the domain of the author and the narrator who tells her story.

Similarly, in Chapter 24, “In Which Mr. Osborne Takes Down the Family Bible,” a warrior knight fights a giant, “S”-shaped dragon (Fig. 1.19). The scene represents Dobbin’s

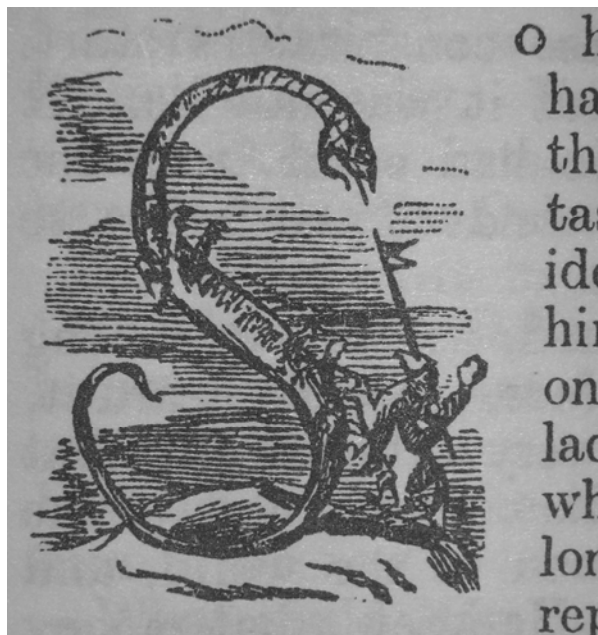


Fig. 1.19. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *S* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 24 (1847-48).

efforts to persuade Mr. Osborne to accept Amelia as his son's wife, "the more difficult part of the task which he had undertaken." As the text also reveals, "The idea of facing old Osborne rendered him not a little nervous" (276), but from the following narrative and the adjacent image we understand that Dobbin courageously and selflessly follows through with this duty. The image, which certainly demonstrates his heroic nature in the face of an indomitable foe but does so in a mildly humorous way that ultimately undercuts the sincerity of the scene, foreshadows Dobbin's failure. In fact, the news of George's marriage leads Mr. Osborne, as the chapter title hints, to mark out his son's name in the family Bible. We, like Dobbin himself, suspected how the encounter would end, and the capital illustration, reflecting the omniscience of the author and the greater knowledge of the narrator, indicate foreknowledge of the result. As in the image with Becky, we see here that even the noble Dobbin cannot escape the critique of the author and is, in the end, subject to the letters and words that shape him.

Other pictorial capitals demonstrate the same subservient position of the novel's characters in relation to the text (and the author) but in a different way.¹⁴ Rather than awkwardly and unnaturally featuring in the images, these letters actually function and blend into the scene. One such example occurs in Chapter 16, "The Letter on the Pincushion." In this scene, two idealized lovers appear positioned on a ladder made from the "H" that begins the chapter (Fig. 1.20). The man reaches up to help the lady as she climbs over the wall and down the central rung toward her lover. These figures represent Becky and her husband, whose secret marriage comes to light in the previous chapter, though it is only from the last

¹⁴ Tucker touches on this intratextual discussion of the image-text dynamic, and even the act of interpretation, in regard to a previously discussed image, Fig. 1.6, in which the male figure appears to be pointing toward the almost inscrutable words within the image (and even adjacent to it), "TO LOND ON," as printed on the road marker, suggesting that "deciphering writing is the way to make progress, in our world as in the verbal text to which everything in the sketch refers" (173).

line on the adjacent page that we learn for certain that it is Rawdon whom she had wed. The period dress of the characters and their passionate elopement represented in the scene



Fig. 1.20. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter *H* for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 16 (1847-48).

result in the sort of romantic take on her marriage that she hopes (and plans) will appeal to and draw in the wealthy Miss Crawley, while the ladder serves as a visual metaphor for the “social ladder” that she, as foreshadowed here, ultimately descends rather than climbs. The episode also reflects the love-sick, romantic façade she adopts not only for Rawdon’s benefit but to further her efforts to secure the sympathy and social acceptance of others after her “story” fails to persuade Miss Crawley. The letter “H” in the scene not only suggests Becky’s skill with language, evident in the letter she leaves for Miss Briggs referenced in the chapter title, but also indicates, again, the writer’s words that ultimately hold her up. Becky’s letter, though effective in moving Miss Briggs, proves a useful weapon for the eager Mrs. Bute Crawley, hoping to secure Miss Crawley’s fortune for her own family. The

ineffectuality of Becky's letter reinforces the dominant linguistic control partly realized in the image and held in the pen of the novel's creator.

Even a delightfully entertaining image like that at the beginning of Chapter 23, "Captain Dobbin Proceeds on His Canvass," cleverly and humorously relates this dynamic. The image alludes to Jos (in exotic locale) and Dobbin's efforts to draw Jos's financial support for the impoverished Sedleys. It also refers to Dobbin's arduous task to secure a happy future for George and Amelia (sacrificing his own desires), as indicated by the chapter's title. As these other capital images have persisted in reminding the audience, it is the language, here represented by the "W" that begins the chapter and forms part of the equipage supporting the man riding on the camel, which carries the characters (Fig. 1.21).

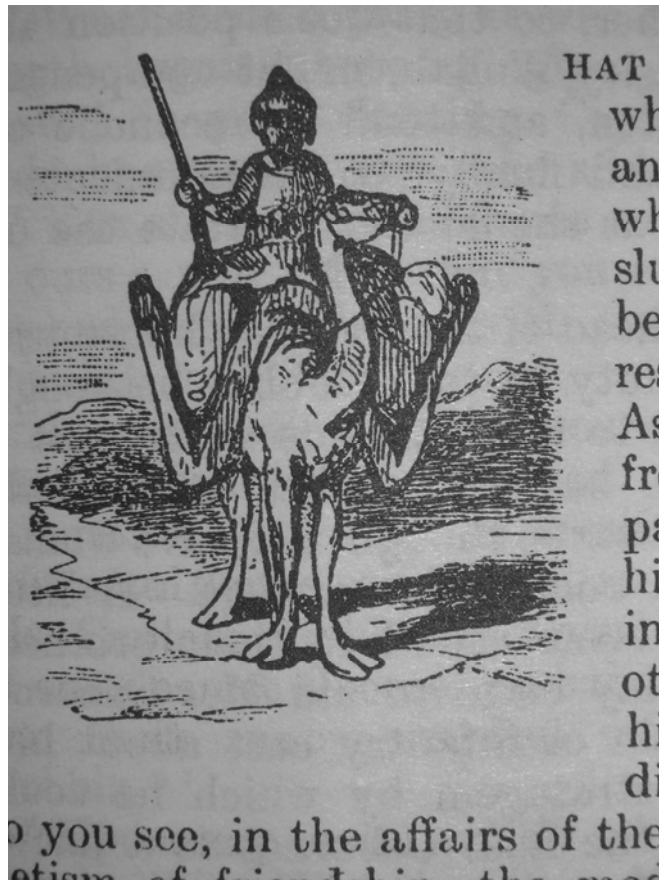


Fig. 1.21. William Makepeace Thackeray, letter W for *Vanity Fair*, chap. 23 (1847-48).

Certainly Jos has fallen prey to its influence and critique, but so has Dobbin, whose great fault “was a personality of so complying a disposition that if his parents had pressed him much, it is probable he would have stepped down into the kitchen and married the cook, and who, to further his own interests, would have found the most insuperable difficulty in walking across the street” (270). The “secret mesmerism” of “friendship” may influence Dobbin (269), but his very selflessness, perhaps unnatural in its excess, falls under the scrutiny of the author and proves a source of frustration for the reader, who longs for him to sweep George out of the way so that the unnaturally devoted Amelia can recognize his true value. Dobbin, like all of the others, the reader included, must bear the censure of the author’s pen. However, as evident in previous images, no one, not even Thackeray himself, is safe from the clever, entertaining, and insightful blows he aims at society.

* * *

Thackeray proved himself to be a master of social satire as he wove together text and image to challenge and interest his readers. Just as the characters he presents struggle to realize their goals, noble and self-interested alike, the audience struggles to interpret the subject of his story and its illustrations, to see beyond the surface of these characters (and themselves) in ways that others in the novel fail to do. In this way, the novel works on many levels, reflecting the writer-reader dynamic as it represents the complexity of society and our own lives and desires. The story may be a performance, upon the close of which we can return the puppet-actors to their chest, but it is a performance with which we are familiar and in which we, like its Victorian audience, participate every day. While the characters learn

and evolve very little or not at all in *Vanity Fair*, the novel compels the reader to recognize and change in a way that these “dolls” cannot. The novel and its illustrations require such attention that the subject of the text seems to be the act of interpretation as much as the lives of the characters it follows, and the skill and skepticism we exercise in the experience of the mixed-media text can be directed beneficially beyond the boundaries of the story and the page. Without these dynamic and complicated images, *Vanity Fair* would seem incomplete and fail in its purpose as a mirror held up to the characters, the readers, and the author’s own artistic medium.

Chapter II

Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* and its Illustrations by Marcus Stone: Capturing the Master's Style and the Revelations of Hybridity

Was it necessary or desirable to have Dickens's novels illustrated? Why did Dickens's original publishers, all of them, think it essential to pay artists to illustrate novels, to illustrate even short pieces of light reading like *Sketches by Boz*? And even if illustrations were desirable or necessary then, do we, sophisticated intellectually, and capable readers of far more difficult novels than Dickens's, need them now? (Q. D. Leavis 332)

Though this opening passage from Q. D. Leavis's¹⁵ chapter titled "The Dickens Illustrations: Their Function," from the book *Dickens the Novelist* (1970, 1979 ed.) written collaboratively with F. R. Leavis, disparages what she identifies as Dickens's less difficult novels and the somewhat limited, explanatory role of illustrations in general, she still raises some key questions—questions relating to the function of illustrations in specific texts by Dickens. By considering Dickens's navigation of mixed-media publication and exploring the style and impact of Marcus Stone's illustrations for one of Dickens's later novels, *Our Mutual Friend*, this project addresses these questions as it points to the critical role of illustrations in general and offers a new interpretation of this specific work as influenced by the images it includes. *Our Mutual Friend* makes for an ideal subject as it has received less critical attention than Dickens's other illustrated work, and the attention it has received has been at best typically dismissive and at worst entirely depreciative. Because of these critical assessments, my argument for the reclamation of illustrations also functions to reclaim the

¹⁵ Throughout the rest of this section my references to Leavis's views regarding Dickens will refer to Q. D. Leavis unless otherwise noted.

novel itself and Marcus Stone's visual interpretation of Dickens's text.

A consideration of three visual elements frequently repeated in Stone's illustrations and indicating the illustrator's power to influence the reader affords insight into the novel as a whole and the mixed-media experience of both its original and contemporary audiences. My analysis will be organized into four sections: 1. The wrapper design, a critical feature of each installment that provided a conglomeration of signs hinting at what will follow in the text; 2. The recurring image of the Thames and its branches, so pivotal in the story and its illustrations that it seems a character in its own right; 3. The visual realization of the odd but endearing woman-child Jenny Wren, whose illustration posed such a challenge for Stone that his struggle impacts his depiction of her; and 4. The creation of Mr. Venus and his shop, an example of the potential power of the illustrator, who, in this case, based his drawing on an actual shop in a dingy section of London and gave Dickens the idea for the character. Each of these elements, in different ways, shows the importance of illustration and its influence over the audience as it modulates and manipulates reader experience and expectation.

Leavis herself provides one practical reason for including illustrations in a text by building on the idea that illustrations explicate and make text accessible, in the visual tradition of satirists Hogarth and Gillray, to a range of audiences:

[T]hanks to this rich tradition and the visual education it provided, even those who took their instalments of fiction orally could fix those in their memories by the two or more full-page pictures that came with each, with the added help of the descriptive pictorial cover that Dickens always had drawn to summarize the plot and themes and show the leading characters in appropriate combinations and context, with the addition of the meaningful frontispiece and often a vignette on the title-page (which, as in the case of the very memorable one on the title-page of *Little Dorrit*, for instance, can be seen to stand half-way between a popular emblematic cut and a Blake-like symbolic vision). (335)

Leavis goes on to describe Dickens as needing illustrations to help him realize a new sort of fiction that would allow him to reach a “mixed readership” via a format that this audience “could cope with and get *something* out of – if not all that there was in it to get” (337):

...Dickens made the illustrations that he had to have, to satisfy traditional expectation and need, serve the purposes of an altogether new art of the novel. The illustrations of Dickens’s novels up to *Bleak House* are a unique addition to the text, not only visualizing a scene for us in its historical social detail, and giving a visual embodiment to the characters which expresses their inner selves for us inescapably, besides being a visual embodiment of dramatic flash-points: the illustrations are frequently indispensable even to us, the highly-trained modern reader, in interpreting the novels correctly because they encapsule the themes and give us the means of knowing with certainty where Dickens meant the stress to fall (since his touch is often lightest where most meaningful, and tactfully indirect).... (336)

Thus Dickens was able to carry with him on his progress from entertainer to artist both a public that even when literate was not educated in reading fiction that had broken with the eighteenth century novel, and also a public that without the illustrations would hardly have been able to cope with a novel doled out in portions at intervals of as much as a month, or even a fortnight, much less the novels of Dickens with (after *Oliver Twist*) their enormous numbers of characters and range of scenes.... (336-338)

Given the complexity of Dickens’s multiple narratives and numerous characters, illustrations are necessary to help a reader keep up with the content of the text. However, though the illustrations may function in this practical capacity, they also serve a more explicitly aesthetic purpose, appearing alongside Dickens’s stories in a harmony of image and text. More significantly, they play a directive role, shaping and manipulating the reader’s expectation and anticipation as they reflect not only the author’s content but his narrative style(s).

Dickens and Illustration: The “Hands-on” Approach

Although Dickens worked with several illustrators over the years, sixteen in total (Bentley 206), Cruikshank and “Phiz,” a name Hablot Knight Browne adopted to be in sync

with Dickens's brief use of the nom de plume "Boz," are the most well known and the two figures who first come to mind when considering Dickens and illustration.¹⁶ When Cruikshank began illustrating Dickens's work in 1835, when he was hired to illustrate Dickens's early collection of essays on life in London titled *Sketches by Boz*, Cruikshank was already an established social satirist and caricaturist (Cohen 15; Leavis 338). Although this style worked well with the tone and content of Dickens's early work and Dickens's early publications benefited from their association with Cruikshank's familiar name, Cruikshank's fame and sense of his own talent made it difficult for Dickens to exert the sort of artistic control he desired in the visual realization of his work (Cohen 16). For example, Cruikshank often sent his illustrations directly to the engraver, something Dickens would not stand for (Leavis 339). By the time Cruikshank illustrated *Oliver Twist* (1837-39), Dickens was well known in his own right, and their creative conflicts, which came to a head with this work, contributed to make this their last collaboration (Cohen 20-21). Dickens later chose H. K. Browne, an artist who was younger, more malleable and, according to Leavis, whose "real merit must have been that he was decidedly in the Hogarth tradition" with its satiric style, as Cruikshank's successor, having already "wisely rejected Thackeray who had applied for the vacant post, and who would have had nothing to offer for Dickens's purposes" (Leavis 338-39). In her discussion of Phiz's illustrations for *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Leavis describes Phiz as having "immersed himself imaginatively in the life of the novel" so that he "found a corresponding visual art for expressing it – not as an independent picture but as an illuminating contribution to the novel" (342). This statement reveals both a sense of the

¹⁶ I have chosen to focus in this section on Dickens's most well-known illustrators. For a description of the other artists who illustrated Dickens's work, such as Robert Seymour and Robert Buss, Dickens's second and third illustrators who worked with him between Cruikshank and Phiz, see *Charles Dickens and His Original Illustrators* by Jane R. Cohen.

important dynamic between author and illustrator and a talent on Phiz's part for appreciating this. Though Dickens certainly required Phiz to change aspects of his illustrations at times, it seems as if Phiz had a firmer grasp than Cruikshank of both the creative and practical functions of his illustrations as elements of a mixed-media artifact that were not meant to stand alone but had to work in cooperation with text in order to result in a relatively seamless, compelling, and successful product. George du Maurier, also an illustrator, praised Phiz for his appreciation of this principle:

Sometimes, as with Hablôt Browne, the achievement is most successful when another's text has been followed to the letter, and the drawing is one with the page it illustrates, so that each is the complement of the other. ("The Illustrating of Books" II: 374)

Interestingly, though Du Maurier may try to follow this tenet in his own illustrations of Elizabeth Gaskell's works, including *Wives and Daughters*, he often visually revised elements of text through seemingly minor though significant changes and directed the reading experience of the audience—something that will be discussed in a later chapter.

Though his illustrators had a limited freedom to select what and how to illustrate, Dickens typically demanded final approval when corresponding with his illustrators and often sent back comments and suggestions regarding how an illustration should be improved. Dickens realized the extent of his own demands, writing to John Forster, "You know how I build up temples in my mind that are not made with hands (or expressed with pen and ink, I am afraid), and how liable I am to be disappointed in these things" (*Letters* 4: 679-60). Forster expands on this point in relation to Phiz's attempts to gain Dickens's approval on his illustrations for *Dombey and Son*:

In itself amusing, it has now the important use of showing, once for all, in regard to Dickens's intercourse with his artists, that they certainly had not an easy time with him; that, even beyond what is ordinary between author and

illustrator, his requirements were exacting; that he was apt, as he has said himself, to build up temples in his mind not always makeable with hands; that in the results he had rarely anything but disappointment; and that of all notions to connect with him the most preposterous would be that which directly reversed these relations and depicted him as receiving from any artist the inspiration he was always vainly striving to give. (2: 25, 28)

It appears as though the only artist who could possibly realize Dickens's vision fully was Dickens. However, Dickens also offered Phiz praise, faint though it may be, for his work: "Browne is certainly interesting himself, and taking pains. I think the cover very good: perhaps with a little too much in it, but that is an ungrateful objection" (*Letters* 4: 620). Phiz illustrated for Dickens for twenty-three years, from his early illustrations for *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-37) to his final illustrations for *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) (Cohen 61-2, 120). Working with Dickens as his illustrator must have been a stressful but not unrewarding task, as the work was sure to find an audience, but it is no wonder that such a prolific writer as Dickens went through several illustrators, not only because of the dynamics of their relationship, but also because of his evolving style and interest in changing aspects of his creative direction.

Dickens worked with illustrators other than Cruikshank and Phiz. Following his collaboration with Phiz, Dickens used artists including Luke Fildes and Marcus Stone to illustrate his later fiction. Many critics have suggested possible reasons for Dickens's deciding not to use Browne to illustrate his last novels. Leavis attributes his dismissal of Phiz to Dickens's having "outgrown" him and the need for illustrations themselves in many ways.¹⁷ To account for Phiz's discharge, Leavis also points to a decline in the quality of his illustrations, at least in part because of his failing health due to the demands and pace of the

¹⁷ While the first part of this assessment may be true, the fact that Dickens continued to use illustrations and illustrators in his later work suggests that he still believed in both their commercial importance and textual significance.

work once Dickens's fiction became popular and more widely produced (360-61). Elizabeth Cayzer, in her article "Dickens and His Late Illustrators: A Change in Style – *Two Unknown Artists*," suggests Dickens desired illustrations that would be more naturalistic and so looked to Stone to "ally his more restrained manner in writing to a more matter-of-fact style of illustration" (3). Cayzer suggests in her comparison of Stone's "Better to be Abel than Cain" (*Our Mutual Friend*, 1864-65) and Fildes's "Mr. Grewgious has his suspicions" (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, 1869-70) that Dickens found this naturalistic quality in the work of Stone and Fildes, as "[b]oth artists draw the human figure in a realistic manner" that reflected "the new impulse in book illustration which was well established by the 1860's and thus a far cry from the negative creations of H. K. Browne" (6). In addition, selecting Stone to illustrate *Our Mutual Friend* allowed Dickens to assist the son of his friend, the recently deceased Frank Stone.

Although Leavis writes that Dickens "ultimately realized that he could dispense with illustrators... because Dickens had by then become an institution, and moreover the character of his creative art had again changed" (353), illustration actually still played a vital role in his later work. Leavis claims that any illustrations that appeared in a text were included out of habit rather than necessity as the Victorian reader no longer relied on them in the same way:

In fact, illustrations to the novels from *Bleak House* onwards would have been unnecessary but for the habit of having illustrations, that had become less and less necessary as the Victorian reading-public had become educated up to a more subtle kind of reading, and had become accustomed to Dickens's mature art. (361)

Although Leavis may be right in that illustrations were not necessary as visual references or keys to help a reader keep track of the many plots and characters typical of a Dickens novel, she fails to acknowledge the sustained influence of a market that may not *need* illustration

but wants and expects it. In addition, the network of sub-plots in *Our Mutual Friend* results in a novel so complex that it requires the sort of visual memory aid that the illustrations provide. The fact remains that the expectations of the intended audience still dictated to the author (and illustrator), who sought to hold his readers' attention, the way such a mixed-media product should be shaped and realized. Additionally, the singularity of Dickens's narrative style and content, which may have required visual explanation, should not be considered as representative of all other examples of image and text in cooperation. Certainly illustrations could function in this way in the work of other authors, but their main function was not necessarily determined by the same practical obligation.

Dickens's fiction and its visual interpretations reveal how this relationship worked, especially as Dickens's style and illustrations changed, at least to some degree, over time. A close examination of the relationship between the text and illustrations of *Our Mutual Friend* not only points to the significance of illustrations and their power to influence the reader, but also indicates Dickens's straddling the line between his old style and a newer one, demonstrating his attempt to evolve creatively in accordance with his own artistic vision and his appreciation of the literary market. Of course, when such changes occur, they affect the illustrations and may account for why so many critics have dismissed and upbraided Stone's work in this novel. In fact, to argue for the reclamation of the illustrations in *Our Mutual Friend* is to argue for the reclamation of the novel, a novel often identified as an example of Dickens's waning talent. Yet even as it reflects the changing and developing skills of both author and illustrator, the text with its illustrations proves an important critical and historical subject—a subject that not only enhances our understanding of the complex relationship between text and image in this medium but provides contemporary scholars and readers with

insight into the tastes and demands of the Victorian audience and the artists who tried to appeal to its members.

Marcus Stone as Illustrator

Dickens came to know the young Marcus Stone as the son of his friend and neighbor, artist Frank Stone. Before Marcus Stone worked for Dickens as illustrator, his father worked as one of Dickens's Christmas book illustrators. Following Frank Stone's death in 1859, Dickens remained relatively close to the Stone family, especially young Marcus, "upon whom 'Boz' had long kept a friendly eye" (Waugh 43). As a boy, Marcus Stone made an illustration based on a scene from Dickens's *Bleak House*, and after complimenting him on his skill and insight, Dickens was given the illustration as a gift by the young artist (Cohen 203). After the death of Frank Stone, Dickens wrote a letter of introduction on Marcus Stone's behalf to Thomas Longman, pointing out the "start this young man made in the last Exhibition" and "the favorable notice his picture attracted," as well as conveying the young Stone's desire "to make an additional opening for himself in the illustration of books" (*Letters* 9: 171). Later, the aspiring artist would illustrate scenes from Dickens's work in a more professional capacity when Dickens, seeking to enliven his work through a change in illustrative style, as well as to help the son of his friend, in 1864 asked Stone to illustrate *Our Mutual Friend* (Cohen 203-04). Stone's first effort in sketching on wood resulted in the frontispiece for the 1861 cheap edition of Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (Kitton 195). Previous to *Our Mutual Friend*, Stone illustrated the 1862 editions of *American Notes* and *Pictures from Italy* and the 1863 edition of *Great Expectations*. Stone also illustrated Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right* (1868-69) as well as works for periodicals such as the *Cornhill Magazine* and

Good Words, among others (Cohen 204, 208). However, he ultimately found his creative niche in painting in what Michael Cotsell describes as “gracefully sentimental genre pictures” (285) and assessed his early work in illustration with a critical eye. Frederic G. Kitton, in contact with Marcus Stone as he wrote *Dickens and His Illustrators*, refers to Stone’s contemporary assessment of these illustrations: “Mr. Marcus Stone regards these early efforts in black-and-white art as very immature” (198). Immature as they may be, as an indicator of the Victorian market and an element to which Dickens certainly gave his attention, as well as something that continues to moderate the reader’s interpretation of the text, these illustrations deserve critical attention.

Though Marcus Stone’s illustrative talent has been maligned by certain critics—Leavis describing him as “apparently having no conception of what illustrating a novel meant” (364)—such narrow judgments fail to account for the change in mid-Victorian aesthetics that influenced Stone as well as his own more naturalistic style, something Dickens sought to refresh his illustrations following Browne’s years of illustrating for him. Part of the widespread dismissal of Stone’s illustrations stems from an attempt to adjust to what Joseph Pennell, Gleeson White, and others identify as a change in public taste that influenced the style of illustration. This transition distinguishes the first half of the century and the work of Dickens’s early illustrators, often characterized by a caricaturist style, from the different aesthetic of the illustrators of the 1860’s and beyond, including Pre-Raphaelite artists with their narrative paintings and increased naturalistic style and those artists of the idyllic school. Illustrations began to take on a life of their own and were viewed as works of art, prompting the publication of the illustrations in collections such as *The Cornhill Gallery* in 1864, a compilation of illustrations that appeared with texts in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and *Millais’*

Illustrations in 1866, a collection of the wood-engravings of many of Millais's drawings (Leavis 365-6). Though Dickens may have sought to update the look of his novels in response to changing tastes and his own evolving style, the fact that his interest in changing conflicted with his continuing to include grotesque characters and satiric elements, things Stone may not have been best suited to realize, may be what critics have responded to in their negative assessments. Granted, as Jane R. Cohen points out, Dickens may not have been ready to embrace the adherence to an independent creative vision that shaped the illustrations of such rising artists such as Millais, Hughes, and Rossetti (203), but his selection of Stone and his variations in style suggest an interest in altering aspects of his work. Though Stone would eventually use his time as an illustrator as a sort of creative stepping stone toward the "more serious art" of painting, this period and collaborative moment proved significant for both the contributors and their audience and represents an intriguing combination of artistic visions.

Our Mutual Friend: The Novel

Our Mutual Friend appeared in twenty monthly numbers published by Chapman and Hall from May 1864 to November 1865 and included forty illustrations by Stone, two plates appearing at the front of each installment. As in Dickens's other novels, *Our Mutual Friend* involves multiple storylines that shed light on the lives of individuals of different social and economic classes. The story opens with Lizzie Hexam out on the Thames with her father, Gaffer, as he searches the water for bodies that he can rob and then turn over to the police for possible monetary reward. Lizzie remains one of the narrative pivot points in the novel, as her heightened sensibility and selflessness cause her to feel disgust at her father's work yet

remain faithfully by his side, caring for him and for her brother, Charley. Her story unfolds as her father dies on the water and she goes to live with the eccentric Jenny Wren, a physically disabled girl who makes dresses for dolls and tries to look after her frequently intoxicated father. Throughout these events, a man of a higher class, Eugene Wrayburn, an aimless and careless fellow, takes a liking to Lizzie and provides access to schooling for her, little knowing what he plans to do with an admirable girl of such a low social status. Lizzie's brother, Charley, and his schoolmaster, Bradley Headstone, who becomes obsessed with Lizzie, try to dissuade Lizzie from accepting anything from Wrayburn and even visit the gentleman in a scene that incenses Headstone and sets him on a path of degradation and violence. Fearing for Wrayburn's safety, Lizzie leaves her home with Jenny but is eventually discovered by Wrayburn, who is closely pursued by Headstone. Following what Lizzie says must be their last meeting, Headstone attacks Wrayburn and leaves him beaten and drowning in a branch of the Thames. Lizzie, used to navigating the river in search of bodies, pulls Wrayburn from the water. For many days he lies in bed on the brink of death, but because he loves Lizzie and wants to preserve her reputation, he marries her and eventually begins to recover slowly, allowing them to live a life together in which Lizzie is raised socially by Wrayburn and Wrayburn is raised in strength of spirit and moral principle by Lizzie. Justice descends on Headstone when, dogged by Rogue Riderhood, another villain who knows his violent secret, he and Riderhood drown together in the river.

This synopsis represents only one of the threads in the story, albeit a major one. While these events unfold for Lizzie, members of the upper class, in which Wrayburn frequently mixes, hear of the stories of Lizzie, Gaffer, and especially the mystery of the supposedly murdered John Harmon, who was to return to London to marry a young woman,

Bella Wilfer, and claim his inheritance. However, the real John Harmon was not murdered but escaped death when men intending to kill him killed a man, George Radfoot, who had planned on killing Harmon and had already adopted his clothes and traveling case.

Riderhood, Gaffer's villainous ex-partner, even implicates the innocent Gaffer in the murder of John Harmon in the hopes of claiming the reward, but has to forego such monetary gains when they discover Gaffer's body caught up in the ropes under his own boat. John Harmon, thought to be dead, then briefly takes on the name Julius Handford before assuming the name of John Rokesmith and allowing his father's employees, the loving couple who treated him so kindly when a boy, Mr. and Mrs. Boffin, to receive the inheritance that would have gone to him. Rokesmith then becomes secretary to the Boffins, a post that allows him to watch over them as they rise in social class and to get to know the character of Bella, who comes to live with the Boffins. Rejected by Bella when he proposes to her as John Rokesmith, he eventually departs the house when Mr. Boffin, supposedly corrupted by wealth and miserliness, commands him to leave. Bella later flees as well and joins Rokesmith, whom she marries. After they have a child, her husband eventually reveals his own identity and takes her back to the house of the Boffins, where they all live together and she learns that the Boffins had discovered Rokesmith's true identity much earlier but had maintained their charade to help Bella overcome her materialistic desires.

Though the upper class, represented in the novel by the Veneerings, the Podsnaps, Mr. Twemlow, and Lady Tippins, among others, hear these events as distant observers, much like the reading audience, they still have some problems of their own. However, their problems are of a slightly different sort, involving the threat of those in need of money who seek to dupe their solvent acquaintances. Alfred Lammle and Sophronia Lammle, in their

minds tricked into marriage by these other members of their set who led each to believe that the other was rich, wed one another thinking they would be wealthy only to find that they are both poor. They set out, then, to avenge themselves by manipulating and deceiving their way into money. A peer of the couple, and one even more heartless in his desire for money and his insensitivity to others, Mr. Fledgeby, owns a sort of lending house that he rules with an iron hand while hiding behind the stereotype of his Jewish employee, Mr. Riah. In the end, Mr. Fledgeby receives a much deserved beating from Mr. Lammle, who is ready to leave the country with his wife after their prospects fail. In this way, all is right and as it should be, except for the fact that the majority of the upper-class characters, like the real inhabitants of London they represent, will go on eating their fancy dinners and discussing the treacherous lives of the hardworking lower classes. They will continue to enjoy the novelty of these distant characters' situations but will ultimately remain immune to their plights, as does the reader, who, perhaps ideally for Dickens, gains a modicum of insight into the lives of these people. Of course, Dickens's moral ideal and reality may differ significantly.

These narrative threads represent but a few of the storylines in the text, but they represent at least the focal points around which the other storylines turn. This complicated plotting characterizes much of Dickens's work, but in this novel it earned mixed reviews. One need only look to the reviews of the 1865, two-volume edition published by Chapman and Hall, to appreciate the disparate responses the novel received. Its review in the November 11, 1865, edition of *The Saturday Review* lambasted the novel and even its author, partly in response to Dickens's postscript directed at critics of his work. The reviewer condemns the ridiculousness of the novel's characters and the implausibility of its plot, saying of the characters that "those which are not outrageous caricatures are mere shadows"

(613). The writer of a review for *The Spectator*, dating from October 28, 1865, finds some of the same faults in the novel but is less harsh in his criticism and discerns redeeming aspects in the work, including “much of Mr. Dickens’s old humour” (1201). At the other end of the spectrum but on the same date as this last review, the reviewer for *The Athenæum* praises the novel by referring to the delight it will bring to all who read it:

Enough, then, has been said to indicate in what point of view we conceive this novel may be regarded, and to prove that, on its being read and read again, every lover of types of human character, every student of Art in fiction, every man who has “humour” in his soul, will find, each and all, enjoyment. (570)

Clearly *Our Mutual Friend* affected its readers in different ways, appealing to some and arousing ridicule in others. Interestingly, and not insignificantly, Dickens’s novel met the same sort of mixed response Stone’s illustrations have encountered in 20th and 21st-century criticism. Perhaps this mix of reviews reflects Dickens’s straddling the caricaturist style of his past novels and the more austere style of his later work, something also reflected in Stone’s illustrations and his struggle to adhere to the text and its author’s creative vision.

While some, including Kitton, have praised Stone’s illustrations for the novel, most, among them Arthur Waugh and Leavis, have vehemently criticized them. Michael O’Hea, on the other hand, astutely points out that “the truth of the matter lies between extreme opinions,” something, as O’Hea observes, that Cohen and Cayzer appreciate in their assessments of Stone’s work. However, even Cayzer’s, and later O’Hea’s, evaluation of the novel’s illustrations register only reluctant, faint praise, as Cayzer identifies “A Friend in Need” and “Not to be Shaken Off” as Stone’s only moderately successful illustrations before pointing out the weaknesses of a few others, while O’Hea praises the ingenuity of Stone’s wrapper design with its visual hints and enticements drawing the reader into the story but

laments that what he admires in the wrapper design “was not carried on in the illustrations of the novel’s incidents” (207). Though I believe Stone’s illustrations do possess certain redeeming qualities, regardless of their quality they impact the audience and influence the reader’s understanding and anticipation. Both of these aspects of the illustrations, their aesthetic value and their impact, constitute the subject of the analysis to follow.

Stone’s Illustrations for *Our Mutual Friend*: Image-Text Analysis

As previously mentioned, *Our Mutual Friend* appeared in twenty monthly numbers with forty illustrations by Stone, split between the engravers Dalziel and W. T. Green.¹⁸ Along with each successive installment, readers counted on the two illustrations that appeared at the front of the text both to draw in their attention and build their anticipation and expectations regarding the portion before them, and to help them remember what happened in previous installments. Unlike some of the other works included in this project, this novel, like many of Dickens’s other novels, continues to appear frequently with its original illustrations, though they are “dropped” into the text rather than kept in their positions at the front of the original installments. Given these facts, my analysis strives to compel readers, scholars, and instructors to consider seriously their role and to incorporate them into their research and instruction in literature courses. To appreciate the significance of Stone’s images to Dickens’s text and the reader’s experience, I will consider the following: the illustrated title page, critical as a part of each installment; the recurring visual (and textual)

¹⁸ Certainly a degree of the variation in images could result from the use of different engravers, but this only underscores the disparity in illustrations that impacts the reading experience and heightens the already provocatively inconsistent style of Stone’s images as he struggles to meet Dickens’s expectations and physically realize his narrative styles. Both Stone and Dickens’s variable styles result in a final illustrative product that contributes to, yet goes beyond, the differences in framing between engravers and is an important aspect of the mixed-media text that will be discussed in greater detail in the pages that follow.

element of water, specifically the Thames, almost a character itself; the challenging figure of the child-adult Jenny Wren, as endearing as she is peculiar; and Mr. Venus, a character invented by the illustrator himself and indicative of Stone's more naturalistic style.

Stone's Wrapper Design

Stone designed the illustrated covers that would appear with each of the twenty installments, from beginning to end of the novel's run. To relate to each successive part yet also relate to the past ones, the cover had to both entice and remind by reflecting recurring elements and central characters as it hinted at critical events in the story. Accordingly, a scene of the Thames, with the London skyline in the dark background and Lizzie and Gaffer Hexam in a small boat in the foreground, fills the uppermost section of the cover (Fig. 2.1). Two characters critical throughout the story as it unfolds, Lizzie and the river itself (which I will discuss in greater detail later in this chapter), appear in the visual apex of the cover. The center of the cover includes a stylized depiction of the title and the names of the author and illustrator enclosed in a rectangular space on a white background, as if it is a paper peeling up on one corner and posted on a wall, like the one advertising a reward for information regarding the murder of John Harmon. This sort of framing ties even the title information to the trajectory of the story.

The remaining images surrounding the central rectangle show scenes and characters relevant to the text, in little rectangular sections that seem to blend into one another just as the episodes will all form the larger, cohesive network of the novel. Although characters'

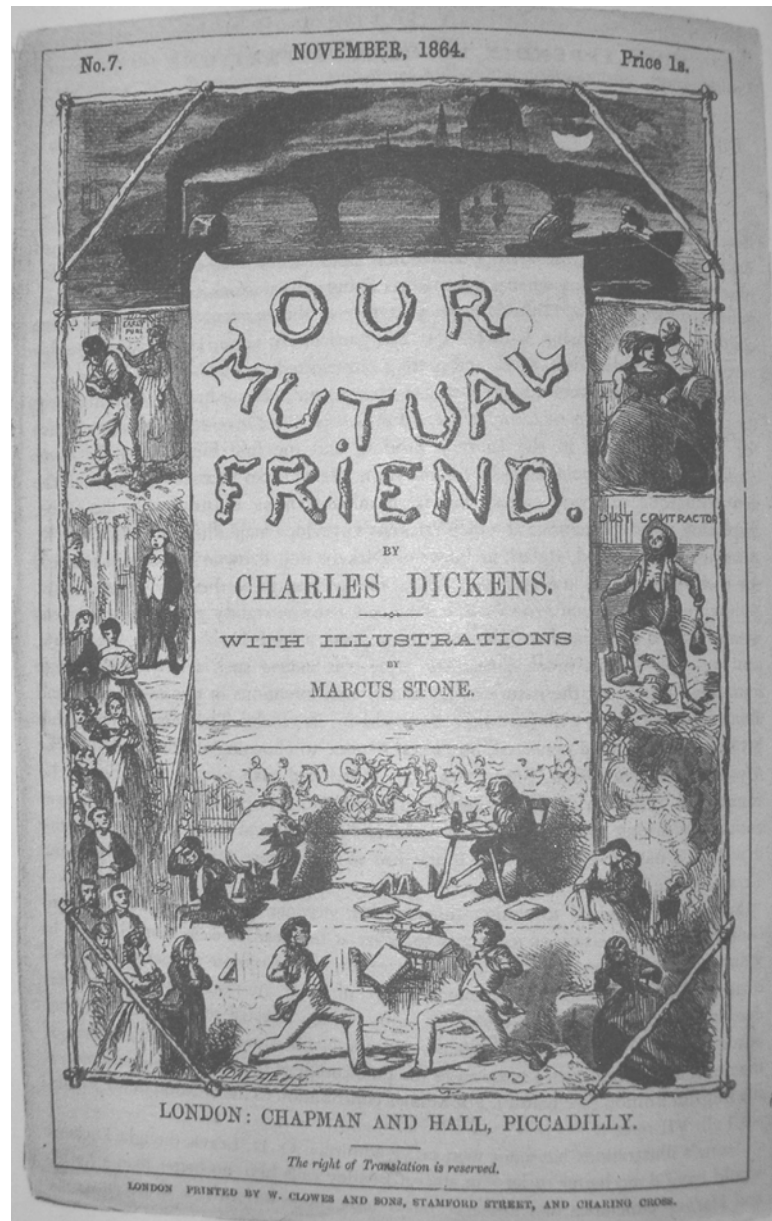


Fig. 2.1. Marcus Stone, monthly wrapper for *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

faces, given the size of the space and the number of episodes packed into it, appear with little detail, their style of dress, the small backgrounds, and the various other props drawn with them reveal their identities as understood in conjunction with Dickens's text. Of course, the fact that these images frequently incorporate elements from full-page illustrations makes identifying them much easier retrospectively. Proceeding clockwise around the central title section, we see Mr. and Mrs. Boffin as described in the text after they inherit the Harmon

fortune and try to embrace their new life, primarily through Mrs. Boffin's adoption of garish dress as part of their "going-in for fashion" (103).¹⁹ Mr. Boffin introduces Mrs. Boffin, "a highflyer at Fashion" (62, 63), to Mr. Wegg, who sees her for the first time dressed in the "black velvet hat and feathers" (64) she boasts on the cover. This image and description also relate to the later illustration "The Boffin Progress," portraying Mr. Boffin and his richly dressed wife as they make a bit of a spectacle of themselves in their makeshift "fashionable" equipage, further emphasizing the sense of continuity among cover, text, and image (Fig. 2.2).

The remainder of the cover proves equally interesting and dynamic. As we progress around the central title section, we encounter an indirect reference to the Boffins again as well as to the inheritance that they, and not John Harmon, receive, this time in the form of their deceased benefactor, Old Harmon, here portrayed as a skeletal dust contractor perched atop one of his mounds. Below this image we see Lizzie and her little brother as she used to care for him and entertain him with her tales inspired by the "hollow down by the flare" (38). Seeing this image again and again as the story's first audiences did reminds the reader of Lizzie's nurturing selflessness as well as her imaginative capacity – qualities that shape her actions and experiences and that define her character. Below this image we see Bella Wilfer dressed in mourning after the death of John Harmon, the betrothed gentleman she had never known, though it also hints at Lizzie's loss of her father and near loss of Wrayburn, reminding us of the suffering she bravely endures throughout the novel. Adjacent to this, in the lowest section of the cover, appear two figures facing off as if mirror images of each other while books from the scene above spill down between them. These two figures, as

¹⁹ Page numbers refer to the Penguin Classics edition (1998), edited and with introduction by Adrian Poole, unless otherwise noted.

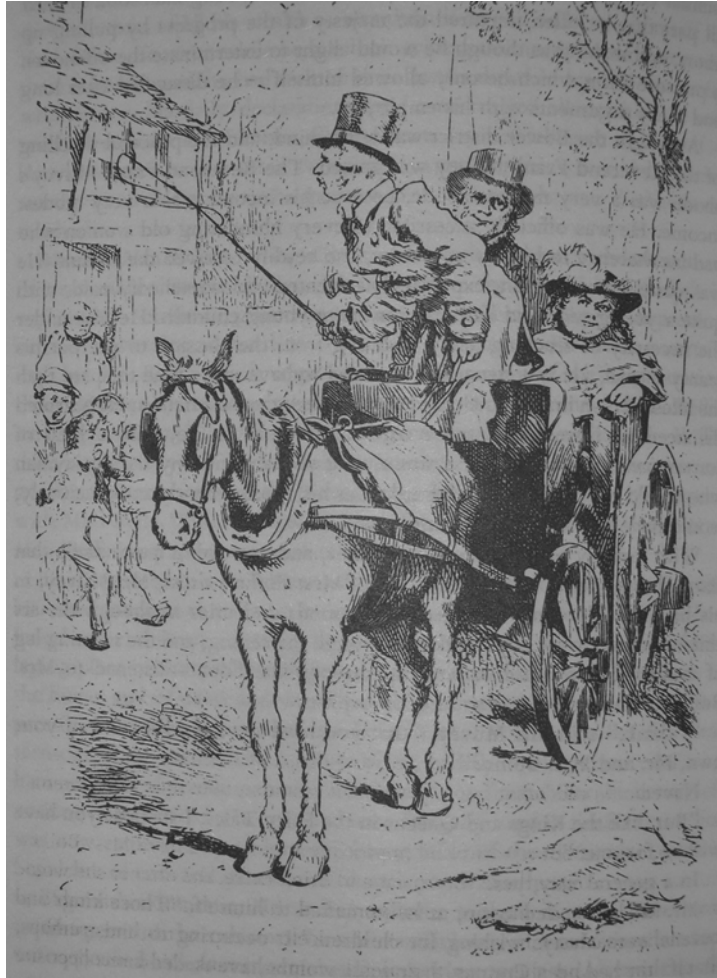


Fig. 2.2. Marcus Stone, “The Boffin Progress,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

O’Hea points out, represent Harmon “recoiling from his lookalike, Radfoot” (205), the man killed in his place. O’Hea points out the barely discernable rope around the neck of the figure on the left, indicating the way in which Gaffer recovers the man’s body from the Thames, and identifies shading suggestive of the facial disfigurement resulting from his being buffeted in the river. At the same time the intensity of the stance and expression of the figure on the right contrast with the lifelessness of the character on the left (206). O’Hea also suggests that these figures could represent not only Harmon and Radfoot but Wrayburn and Headstone (206-7), since Dickens requested that Stone foreshadow the death of Wrayburn at

the hands of Headstone (Kitton 197),²⁰ a death that ultimately did not occur. Then again, the two could also represent aspects of Lizzie's younger brother, Charley, who aspires to rise in life and, with Lizzie's help, pursues school and work as a schoolmaster. However, he must contend with himself and his own past, resulting in a young man who fights with his heritage as his desire to be of a higher social standing evokes a shame of his past and his own sister that defeats his better self. At the same time, one of the two figures could represent his schoolmaster, Headstone, with whom he later falls out due to Bradley's attack on Wrayburn and Charley's anxiety regarding what such an association could mean for his future. According to either of these last scenarios, the reader gains insight into and continues to be reminded of the inner struggles of Lizzie's brother as well as the circumstances that plague Lizzie herself. All of these interpretations indicate the interesting play on the themes of identity and truth to self that define the novel.

The books in the vignette suggest schooling and study and serve to connect this image to the one above it in which Silas Wegg, hired by Mr. Boffin, helps the Golden Dustman in his efforts at reading. Wegg, with his familiar wooden leg, appears at one end of this scene at a little table displaying the food and drink he weasels out of Boffin at their meetings. In sharp contrast to this we see Boffin absorbed in a mural reflecting his visions of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which Wegg reads aloud to him. This small image powerfully sets the two characters against each other – one as the kind-hearted, naïve, dreamer and the other as the manipulative schemer concerned with his own satisfaction. Here the reader gains insight into these men while at the same time receiving a hint, via the subject of the book and the mural, regarding the conflicts to follow.

²⁰ The letter to Stone in which Dickens expresses this original plan was dated July 19, 1865 and remains unpublished in the Morgan Library but is quoted by Marcus Stone in Kitton's *Dickens and His Illustrators*.

Finally, on the left side of the cover we see several other images and figures, including the members of “Society” who, in many ways like the readers, watch the lives of these other, lower characters unfold as if nothing more than a quaint story. To reflect their voyeuristic qualities they appear here filling the lower half of the left side of this outer frame and seem to gaze at the other scenes and characters. While the figures in the other images gaze either toward each other or out of the page, these characters gaze at the other scenes, watching from the sort of distant perspective that they, like the audience, enjoy. This depiction not only reveals their occasional appearance in the story as a sort of framing device and point of reference against which to contrast the lives and troubles of the lower classes, allowing Dickens to criticize certain social problems he recognizes, but it points out their seeming indifference both to the other figures on the cover and each other as they appear as one, amorphous mass lacking individualism and identifiable only as a characterless blob of dress, coiffure, and manner. However, despite this sense of their being a single entity, certain characters can be identified, among them the confused Twemlow, trying to discern his role in relation to the Veneerings and seemingly perched at the foot of Mr. Boffin’s stool. At his knees stand Wrayburn and Lightwood, here aligned with the upper class in a way that emphasizes Wrayburn’s social distance from Lizzie, though significantly he appears on approximately the same level as Lizzie on the other side of the page. Below the door, Alfred and Sophronia Lamble, plotting against the other members of the upper class, appear in secret consultation, while Mrs. Veneering and her baby, among others, appear below them. Though specific characters can be identified in this small section, Stone clearly groups them together in such a way that proves a powerful contrast to the other characters in the design.

The last image, appearing above these and directly below the upper image of the Thames, introduces the villainous Roger (Rogue) Riderhood at the moment when Miss Abbey Potterson sends him away from the Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters. In this one scene Stone represents characters, and even a place, that will recur throughout the story as well as a mystery that will take installment after installment to unfold: who killed John Harmon and how are Riderhood and Gaffer involved? Of course, attached to such questions are the mysteries of Riderhood and Gaffer themselves, as well as the lives of those connected with them and affected by their actions, all of which plays out in Dickens's novel.

As was typical for Dickens, he exercised an extensive degree of authorial control and offered Stone feedback and advice, especially regarding this wrapper design. However, Dickens's praise of Stone's design not only indicates that Dickens himself appreciated Stone's work but confirms the consistency of Stone's style and selected subjects in relation to the text. Such is evident in his letter, dated February 23, 1864, written to Stone in response to the original wrapper design he sent Dickens:

I think the design for the cover *excellent*, and do not doubt its coming out to perfection. The slight alteration I am going to suggest, originates in a business consideration not to be overlooked.

The word "Our" in the title, must be out in the open, like Mutual Friend; making the Title three distinct large lines—"Our" as big as "Mutual Friend". This will give you too much design at the bottom. I would therefore take out the Dustman, and put the Wegg and Boffin composition (which is capital), in its place. I don't want Mr. Inspector or the Murder Reward bill, because those points are sufficiently indicated in the River at the top. Therefore you can have an indication of the Dustman, in Mr. Inspector's place. Note, that the Dustman's face should be droll, and not horrible. Twemlow's elbow will still go out of the frame as it does now, and the same with Lizzie's skirts on the opposite side. With these changes, work away! (*Letters* 10: 361-62)

In response to this letter, Stone moved the letters in "Our" out from under the bridge and into the same space as the rest of the title and retained, but shifted, Old Harmon to the side. He

made a few other changes not suggested in the letter, resulting in the wrapper as it appeared with each number. Clearly Dickens, never one to give unqualified praise, still recognized Stone's skillful execution of the design, an integral part of each installment and the reader's experience of the story. Though Stone often selected the scenes he illustrated, he also followed Dickens's suggestions regarding what to illustrate and altered his selections when Dickens objected to them. However, in the end, either because of Dickens's confidence in Stone's ability and his willingness to follow Dickens's lead, as Cohen suggests, or because of Dickens's trip abroad to recuperate emotionally after surviving a train derailment at Staplehurst that killed or injured several passengers in June 1865, Dickens stopped commenting on Stone's proofs and allowed them to go directly from artist to engraver (206-7).

The Thames

The importance of the Thames as narrative symbol, not to mention as part of the physical landscape, is evident throughout the text and its illustrations. Dickens acknowledges this in the foregoing letter when he advises Stone to remove Mr. Inspector and the reward bill, as the river alone serves as a sufficient symbol of the murder in the story. Images of the Thames appear again and again, in both word and image, reflecting the important role of the river in defining the daily lives of many Londoners and the cityscape as a whole. It is here where the story opens, and as the story continues we return to its shores time and time again to experience its significance, primarily among the laboring classes. Interestingly, however, it is also here that the inheritance of John Harmon is for a time lost as Gaffer Hexam recovers what is thought to be his body from the waters of the Thames,

showing that its influence reaches into the lives of even the higher classes. From the death of Gaffer to Lizzie's saving of Wrayburn and the deaths of Riderhood and Headstone, the power of the Thames and its waters to both support and take life appears as a common central thread throughout the novel, and Stone reflects the importance of this "character" in his illustrations, beginning with the cover discussed above and repeated in numerous images throughout the novel.

Two images introduce the reader to the life and character of Gaffer Hexam: those titled "The Bird of Prey" and "The Bird of Prey Brought Down." "The Bird of Prey" appeared as the first, full-page illustration in both the first installment of the story and volume one of the two-volume, Chapman and Hall edition of 1865 (and in contemporary editions such as the Penguin Classics Edition) (Fig. 2.3). Given the primary position of this first illustration, its potential to influence the reader's interpretation and expectations regarding its subject can hardly be overestimated. The image shows Lizzie and her father as they progress down the Thames, practicing Gaffer's distasteful work as described in Chapter 1, "On the Look Out":

The figures in this boat were those of a strong man with ragged grizzled hair and a sun-browned face, and a dark girl of nineteen or twenty, sufficiently like him to be recognizable as his daughter. The girl rowed, pulling a pair of sculls very easily; the man, with the rudder-lines slack in his hands, and his hands loose in his waistband, kept an eager lookout. He had no net, hook, or line, and he could not be a fisherman; his boat had no cushion for a sitter, no paint, no inscription, no appliance beyond a rusty boathook and a coil of rope, and he could not be a waterman; his boat was too crazy and too small to take in cargo for delivery, and he could not be a lighterman or river-carrier; there was no clue to what he looked for, but he looked for something, with a most intent and searching gaze. The tide, which had turned an hour before, was running down, and his eyes watched every little race and eddy in its broad sweep, as the boat made slight head-way against it, or drove stern foremost before it, according as he directed his daughter by a movement of his head. She watched his face as earnestly as he watched the river. But, in the intensity of her look there was a touch of dread or horror. (13)

Without revealing the mystery regarding Gaffer's profession that Dickens so artfully develops, the illustration captures both the physical description of the scraggly man and the emotional portrait of the frightened girl. However, while Stone's image supports this section of text in these ways, it also strays from and compresses it with later sections in order to present more powerfully the differences of these two in character and temperament.



Fig. 2.3. Marcus Stone, "The Bird of Prey," from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

Lizzie turns away from her father only once in the text and covers her head with the cloak she wears, but by showing this bodily gesture, and without the covered face, at this point, the illustration represents both Gaffer's eagerness and Lizzie's resistance as it foreshadows, through their physical distance and difference in posture in this scene, their eventual separation. At the same time, the image builds the reader's anticipation by foreshadowing other sinister developments, as Riderhood appears at a distance in another boat and Gaffer leans expectantly over the stern to discover what sort of "treasure" he may pull from the tide. Each of these hints at the death and suffering to follow, for by the story's end both Riderhood

and Gaffer will be dead and more than one body will be drawn from these waters. Framed by these rough, animal-like men, Lizzie stands out as a figure both sensitive in her troubled expression and strong in her ability to direct and propel the boat. Through his placement and characterization of Lizzie in contrast to these others and his manipulation of the text, Stone skillfully develops the audience's expectations regarding the people and events of the tale to follow, including the importance of the story's setting. As a recurring element in the action of the story and a fixture in the London landscape, the Thames appears again and again in Stone's illustrations and so naturally serves as the setting for this first image, giving us insight into both the thoughts of one of the novel's central characters and the heart of the city itself.

Both Gaffer and the Thames comprise part of the subject in "The Bird of Prey Brought Down," an illustration "dropped" into the text as part of Chapter 14, which bears the same title, and originally published in the beginning of Part V in September 1864. In this scene, Gaffer lies dead on the shore of the river, having gotten caught up in his own rope only to fall over and drown beside his boat (Fig. 2.4). We, like those depicted with him in the scene, look upon the broken form of this man, at this point almost indistinguishable in his wet and dirty clothes from the muddy shore of the Thames, "[s]oaking into this filthy ground" (175). Here the city skyline fades into the background as the body and cluster of men that gazes upon it absorb the viewer's attention. Riderhood stands apart from the group, again associated with the river and appearing a short distance from Gaffer. Their common dependence on the river and their shady professions continue to link these characters, until this final dissolution of any lingering association between them. This illustration, then, not only affirms the role of the Thames in the novel, but it visually manipulates and compresses



Fig. 2.4. Marcus Stone, “The Bird of Prey Brought Down,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

Dickens’s text to hint at what will follow later in the story as its multiple mysteries unfold.

Stone sets two more scenes, portraying two pairs of people linked fatally both with each other and with the water, by a tributary of the Thames. The first of these, “The Parting by the River,” published in Part XVII in October 1865, shows Lizzie and Wrayburn after they have said goodbye, Lizzie having attempted to save Wrayburn by pushing him out of her life (Fig. 2.5). The dialogue begins here as Wrayburn makes a promise that, according to Stone’s illustration, he does not keep:

“I promised that I would not accompany you, nor follow you. Shall I keep you in view? You have been agitated, and it’s growing dark.”

“I am used to be out alone at this hour, and I entreat you not to do so.”

“I promise. I can bring myself to promise nothing more to-night, Lizzie, except that I will try what I can do.”

“There is but one means, Mr. Wrayburn, of sparing yourself and of sparing me, every way. Leave this neighbourhood to-morrow morning.”

“I will try.”

As he spoke the words in a grave voice, she put her hand in his, removed it, and went away by the river-side. (679)

Stone's illustration captures their parting at a moment that we presume must fall shortly after this exchange, despite Dickens's not describing it in the text. Though Dickens tells of Wrayburn looking up at the moon and even "[t]urning suddenly" when a man, later revealed as Headstone, almost runs him down, Dickens does not mention Wrayburn turning back to gaze at Lizzie in the sentimental way Stone depicts. The effect of this upon the reader is to



Fig. 2.5. Marcus Stone, "The Parting by the River," from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

amplify the sad, romantic dynamic of this scene, heightening it to such a pitch that it becomes almost palpable. Sentimentalizing the scene in this way also reveals the nature of Wrayburn and Lizzie's relationship to the casual viewer, as yet unfamiliar with the story or in need of a reminder. In the image, Lizzie, to whom we continue to relate the most, features in the forefront, while Wrayburn appears at such a distance that his face and expression are almost inscrutable, though his posture and the position of his hand and arm suggest his heartache and emotional pain. The focus of the moment, however, is not their individual responses; rather, it is the dynamic of these two, the impossible attraction that they share, that

is the point of the illustration. In addition to heightening the romantic tone, Stone's liberty in his illustration in showing Wrayburn turn to watch Lizzie after she has asked him not to serves two other narrative functions. First, it reflects the willfulness of Wrayburn—a willfulness that has prompted him to insult Headstone and follow Lizzie even after her attempts to flee the city of London. This willfulness, at its best thoughtless and at its worst simply selfish, defines his seemingly purposeless, meandering, upper-class life. However, this same strong will compels him ultimately to marry the much deserving but lower-class Lizzie. Second, his looking back at her as she walks away also suggests this event and foreshadows their future bond.

Meanwhile, the river, the taker and supporter of human life, looms menacingly in the background and foreshadows the violent attack that will result in Wrayburn's almost dying in its waters. Though Headstone does not appear in this illustration, the nearby water casts a dark light on this romantically sad moment and alludes to the sinister events about to unfold. In the initial publication of the installment, this illustration appeared with the image "Better to be Abel than Cain," showing a miserable Headstone curled up on the floor after being chastised and accused of Wrayburn's murder by Lizzie's brother, Charley (Fig. 2.6). Together these images present this strange love triangle and foreshadow the pain and suffering to follow in the pages of the story yet to be read. Dropped into the text as they are in modern editions of the novel, they still impact the reader's experience as I have suggested, and Stone's manipulation of Dickens's story becomes all the more evident when his images are published side by side with the written word.

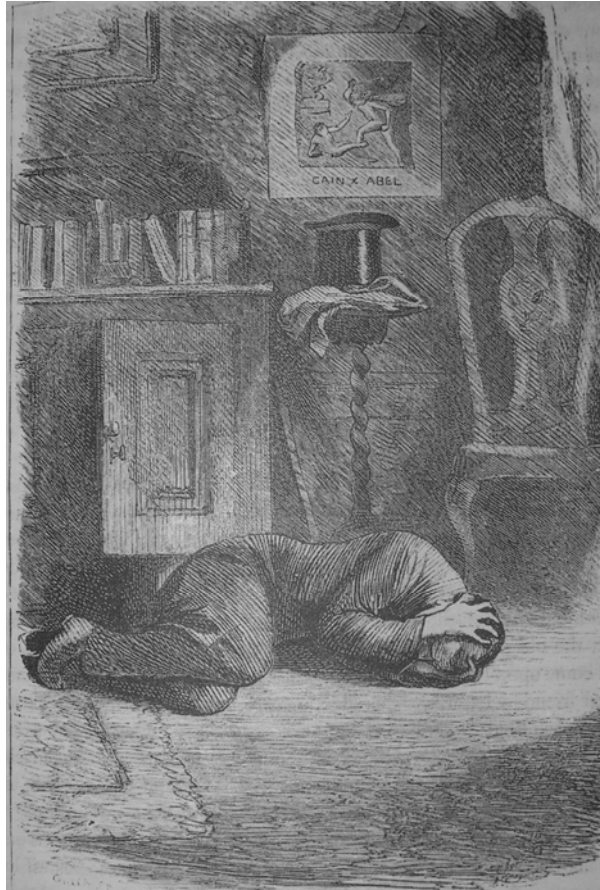


Fig. 2.6. Marcus Stone, “Better to be Abel than Cain,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

The other image set by a branch of the river appeared in the final installment, published in November 1865, and bears the title “Not to be shaken off.” It shows Headstone and Riderhood as they walk by the gates of the river moments before the struggle that ends in both their deaths (Fig. 2.7). Once again we see figures recognizable in dress and shape more than in detailed features; whether this points out Stone’s artistic limitations in this medium or simply emphasizes that the point of the scene is to convey a relational dynamic and foreshadow their looming deaths, or both, is certainly debatable. Ultimately, however, we are left with the illustration and the effect its subject and composition have on the viewer. The small space the characters take up in the scene in comparison to the river gates hints at the coming violence as well as reminds the reader of the gruesome fate of these two. The

inclement weather, dead earth and trees, and sinister gates drawn seemingly to resemble a sneering mouth or scowling face create a feeling of dread and fear in the audience. At the same time, this final illustration, which depicts a part of the river ending in the river's lock gate, acts as a visual sign of the story's closing and the second part of a framing device that emphasizes the role of the river in the story and its characters' lives. The very first illustration shows Lizzie and Gaffer on the Thames as Gaffer scours its waters for the dead,



Fig. 2.7. Marcus Stone, “Not to be shaken off,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

which he soon joins, while this last image repeats the visual and textual trope of the river, again foreshadowing death and reminding the reader of the inextricable links among the river, life, and death.

The final image that depicts the Thames, Stone's illustration “More Dead than Alive,” which appeared in Part IX in January 1865, falls between, though not adjacent to, the two river scenes described above. It shows John Harmon after escaping the rogues who intended to kill him but who mistakenly killed another man, George Radfoot, who had poisoned

Harmon with the intent of robbing him and passing for him, given their similarities in appearance (Fig. 2.8). The illustration, then, serves as part of Harmon's revelatory

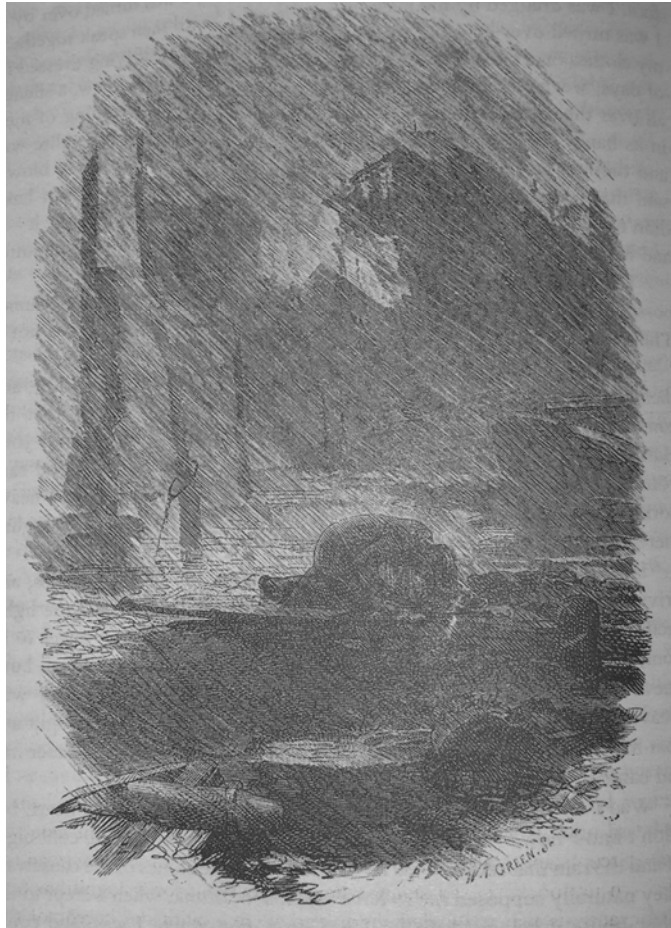


Fig. 2.8. Marcus Stone, “More Dead than Alive,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

exposition, finally letting the reader know how he came to be thought dead and how he really survived and came to take on the aliases of Julius Handford and John Rokesmith. Though Harmon recounts his misadventure for himself, the audience sees and hears him as he remembers the events of the evening he returned to London—events that culminate in Harmon's almost drowning in the river:

It was only after a downward slide through something like a tube, and then a great noise and a sparkling and crackling as of fires, that the consciousness came upon me, ‘This is John Harmon drowning! John Harmon, struggle for your life. John Harmon, call on Heaven and save yourself!’ I think I cried it out aloud in a great agony, and then a heavy horrid

unintelligible something vanished, and it was I who was struggling there alone in the water.

I was very weak and faint, frightfully oppressed with drowsiness, and driving fast with the tide. Looking over the black water, I saw the lights racing past me on the two banks of the river, as if they were eager to be gone and leave me dying in the dark. The tide was running down, but I knew nothing of up or down then. When, guiding myself safely with Heaven's assistance before the fierce set of the water, I at last caught at a boat moored, one of a tier of boats at a causeway, I was sucked under her, and came up, only just alive, on the other side.

Was I long in the water? Long enough to be chilled to the heart, but I don't know how long. Yet the cold was merciful, for it was the cold night air and the rain that restored me from a swoon on the stones of the causeway.
(363)

The image illustrates Harmon's desperate recovery on the shore as the rain falls brutally upon him. The illustration, with its hazy skyline and rough outlines in combination with the fact that Stone entirely obscures Harmon's face, evokes a feeling rather than a specific geographical place or even recognizable features in Harmon. In this way, the audience does not see Harmon's face revealing his pain but rather experiences the setting as wholly defined by this agony. The haziness and lack of clear delineation reflect his confusion, while his hidden face indicates his loss of name and inheritance and foreshadows the intentional obfuscation of his identity that he soon sets into motion. Rather than illustrate the horror and excitement of his near-drowning in the water, Stone shows the reader the degree to which Harmon falls physically and emotionally after these events. As Dickens conveys Harmon's mental and emotional state throughout the text, so Stone depicts him on the shore in this scene, isolated and alone—a state Harmon himself laments before recounting this strange episode: "A spirit that was once a man could hardly feel stranger or lonelier, going unrecognized among mankind, than I feel" (360). In this single image of Harmon alone, Stone presents the reader with a sort of visual interior landscape that informs our understanding of his character for the duration of the story. By picking up on a brief,

seemingly unimportant narrative transition, Stone reveals the depth of Harmon's feelings through the backdrop of the harsh rain and the indifferent waters of the Thames.

The river appears as a visual device that provides the reader insight, whether into a character's emotional state and physical experiences or the daily life of London and its people. As both a narrative tool and a symbol of love, life, and loss, the river pervades the novel's images and lines. But it also serves as an important geographical and social symbol reflecting the reality of London life, especially for those of the lower classes like Lizzie and her father, who must eke out a dangerous, meager living based on the offerings of its cold waters.

Jenny Wren

Jenny Wren enters the textual scene as one of the most eccentric and peculiar characters in the story. Strange in both appearance and behavior due to her hunched, delicate frame often supported by a crutch, her woman-child perspective, and her treatment of her drunken father as a bad child always to be scolded, Jenny Wren presents a challenge for both the reader and the illustrator. For this reason, Stone's visual realization of this odd personage plays an important role in guiding the reader's understanding and interpretation of the text. The last lines of the letter, dated September 29, 1864, in which Dickens comments on Stone's original wrapper design reveal Stone's struggle to realize this character visually: "The Doll's dressmaker is immensely better than she was. I think she should now come extremely well. A weird sharpness not without beauty, is the thing I want" (*Nonesuch* 3: 380). Even though Dickens seems pleased with Stone's improvements, his very description of her, with "[a] weird sharpness not without beauty," indicates the sort of oddness and seemingly

contradictory aspects of her appearance that would pose such a challenge for Stone. The same sort of textual descriptions posed a challenge for the reader trying to imagine her as well, making Stone's illustrations of Jenny all the more critical and influential.

Jenny Wren, a doll's dressmaker, first enters the story as the "woman" of the house where Lizzie dwells after the death of her father, Gaffer. Lizzie looks after Jenny, who looks after her own father. Dickens provides an initial description of her figure and personality when Lizzie's brother, Charley, and his schoolmaster, Headstone, visit the house to see Lizzie about pursuing some schooling of her own:

The boy knocked at a door, and the door promptly opened with a spring and a click. A parlour door within a small entry stood open, and disclosed a child – a dwarf – a girl – a something – sitting on a little low old-fashioned arm-chair, which had a kind of little working bench before it.

"I can't get up," said the child, "because my back's bad, and my legs are queer. But I'm the person of the house." (222)

The reader gains more details regarding her appearance farther down the page:

The queer little figure, and the queer but not ugly little face, with its bright grey eyes, were so sharp, that the sharpness of the manner seemed unavoidable. As if, being turned out of that mould, it must be sharp.

And again, we read more about her odd mix of youth and age later in the same chapter:

It was difficult to guess the age of this strange creature, for her poor figure furnished no clue to it, and her face was at once so young and so old. Twelve, or at the most thirteen, might be near the mark. (224)

Though Dickens creates Jenny to be an intriguing and endearing character, his strange descriptions of her challenge the reader who struggles to imagine what she is like. Because of this, the reader relies strongly on Stone's illustrations of her. Even Stone, as suggested in Dickens's letter, struggled to represent Jenny based on Dickens's textual description of the character. In the end, it is Stone's interpretation of Jenny that determines the audience's interpretation of her appearance and, to an extent, her manner and behavior.

Additional evidence of the challenge Stone faced in visually realizing Jenny Wren may be found in the first image of her in the text, “The Person of the House and the Bad Child.” This illustration, published as part of the sixth installment in October 1864, shows Jenny from the back, allowing Stone to avoid the problem of drawing her strange facial features and playing on the reader’s uncertainty to build suspense regarding her appearance (Fig. 2.9). Granted, if avoidance was his intention here, he could dodge the problem for only so long, and in fact he does show her from the front in the next image to be discussed,

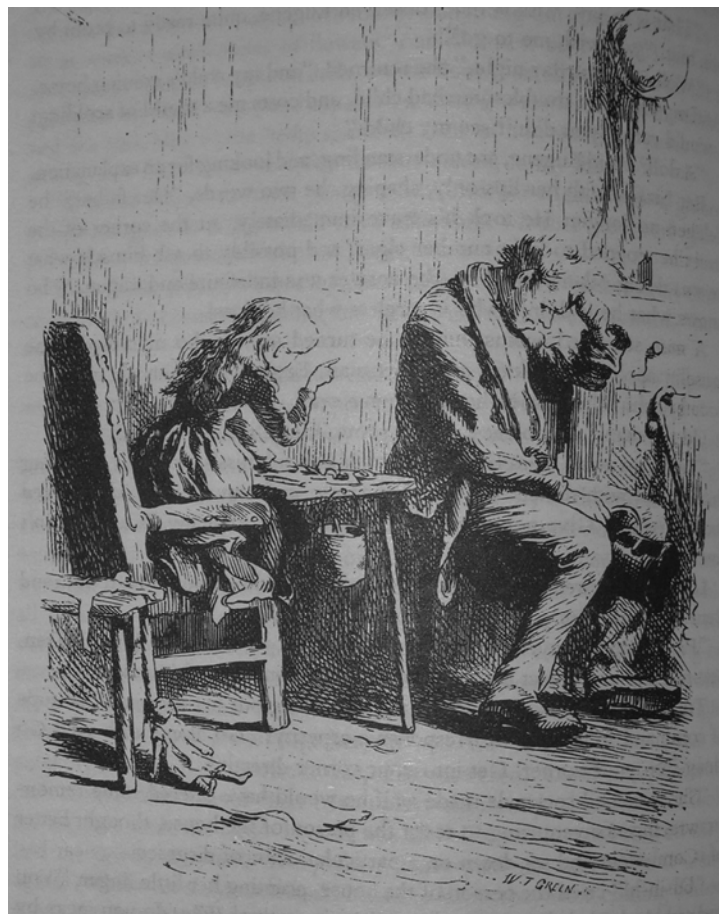


Fig. 2.9. Marcus Stone, “The Person of the House and the Bad Child,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

one that appeared, heightening the reader’s anticipation, in the following installment. In the first representation, however, the audience at least gains insight into her character if not into her physical appearance. The image reflects Dickens’s identification of her job as a

dressmaker for dolls in the little doll on the floor and the form splayed across the end of the bench, as well as his description of Jenny's small, delicate stature. In addition, the strange dynamic between father and child plays out here as Jenny points an admonishing finger at her drunk, ashamed father, who sits in the corner where his child-mother has sent him:

“How's my Jenny?” said the man, timidly. “How's my Jenny Wren, best of children, object dearest affections broken-hearted invalid?”

To which the person of the house, stretching out her arm in an attitude of command, replied with irresponsible asperity: “Go along with you! Go along into your corner! Get into your corner directly!”

The wretched spectacle made as if he would have offered some remonstrance; but not venturing to resist the person of the house, thought better of it, and went and sat down on a particular chair of disgrace. (239)

Whether or not the image reveals Stone's discomfort in attempting to draw Jenny as Dickens describes her, it certainly builds the reader's suspense and visually represents Jenny's strange relationship with her father. However, if Stone did postpone illustrating Jenny, he must have done so out of a desire to adhere strictly to Dickens's complex presentation of her in the text—a text he could not avoid fully illustrating in later scenes involving Jenny and her odd but appealing physiognomy.

“The Garden on the Roof,” depicting Jenny and Lizzie on the roof of the building in which Mr. Riah runs a money-lending business for his cruel employer, Fledgeby, appeared in the November 1864 installment. In this illustration, the audience sees the face of Jenny and the profile of Lizzie, as well as Riah and Fledgeby in the background (Fig. 2.10). Stone yet again reminds us of the reality of London and city life by including a flat cityscape, with billowing smoke and hazy sky, in the distance. At the same time, he draws the reader's attention to the social status of Riah, with the untrimmed hair and beard and shabby dress of an impoverished Jew in the city, and Fledgeby, his manipulative, “Christian” employer who

keeps himself respectable by forcing Riah to play into stereotype and tighten the screws on those who have borrowed money of him. Stone presents a frozen moment in this scene when



Fig. 2.10. Marcus Stone, “The Garden on the Roof,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

Fledgeby steps out of the doorway to the roof and Lizzie looks back over her shoulder to see who has entered. It shows Lizzie and Jenny as they attempt to gain some schooling and steal a moment in this rooftop bower away from the dirty city and their arduous work represented in the dark and dingy skyline. Here we see Jenny at last head on, though even in this scene she does not look directly out toward the reader but down toward a book in Lizzie’s lap. Yet still we see Stone’s attempt to realize the oddity of her features in the image of her face,

which appears like that of an adult on a miniature scale. Her troubled expression and gesture as she holds her head in apparent frustration while attempting to read reveal the maturity within the little, broken form and build on the reader's understanding of her character as an endearing but pitiable "little creature" (238). Stone's method of representing mature children on a small scale appears again in the companion image to this one included in the same installment, "Forming the Domestic Virtues." In this scene, Charley Hexam appears as an adult on an unnatural, miniature scale as he demands that Wrayburn leave his sister alone (Fig. 2.11). The similarity in style between these two youths echoes some of the qualities

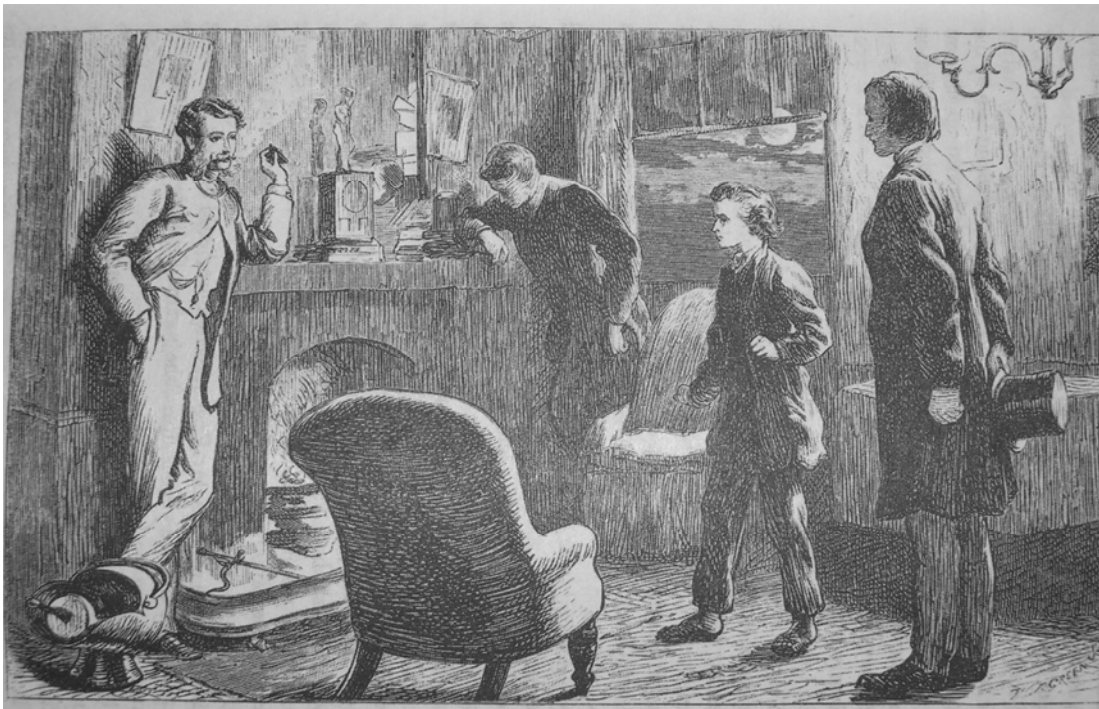


Fig. 2.11. Marcus Stone, "Forming the Domestic Virtues," from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

Dickens describes the characters possessing, but it also suggests either the limitations of Stone's skills or his efforts to compare these individuals, caught between childhood and adulthood, in a way that sets them apart from those around them and indicates both their strangeness and their social displacement. Granted, Charley has a better chance of eventually finding his place in society than Jenny, whose physical handicap, limited education, and

eccentricities will ensure her marginality, but the visual connection between the two proves intriguing. It both sets them apart and briefly unites them as it indicates qualities of Stone's illustrative style—a style that visually realizes a Jenny that Dickens praises as being in keeping with his own description and desired effect (*Nonesuch* 3: 380).

The reader continues to gain insight into the strange and dynamic Jenny Wren in three other illustrations, each representing a piece, if not the discernable whole, of her character and appearance. In “Trying on for the Dolls’ Dressmaker,” published in Part XI in March 1865, Jenny once again appears in partial obscurity, though this time her body and not her face is hidden (Fig. 2.12). Strangely, her face looks rather different than it does in the later roof-top illustration (something critics of Stone identify as a recurring weakness in his illustrations), but then Stone shows her from a different perspective each time, either as a way of dealing with his problems in depicting Jenny or as a way to present different parts of the character that can be pieced together in a larger picture in the reader's imagination. This image builds on our understanding of both her handicap, as she stands awkwardly hunched forward, and her work, as she looks to the streets and the clothes of the upper classes for inspiration in designing dresses for dolls. The large cloak of the fancy woman in the foreground, with her ornately ruffled dress peeking out beneath this cover, fills a portion of the scene and provides a stark contrast to the diminutive, broken form of little Jenny. In this way, the image reinforces the class contrast that Dickens lays out in the novel as he presents the Veneering set against the river set and lower classes as well as establishes Jenny's place in this hierarchy and again manipulates the emotions of the reader to evoke a sort of pity and anger at the injustice of the situation.

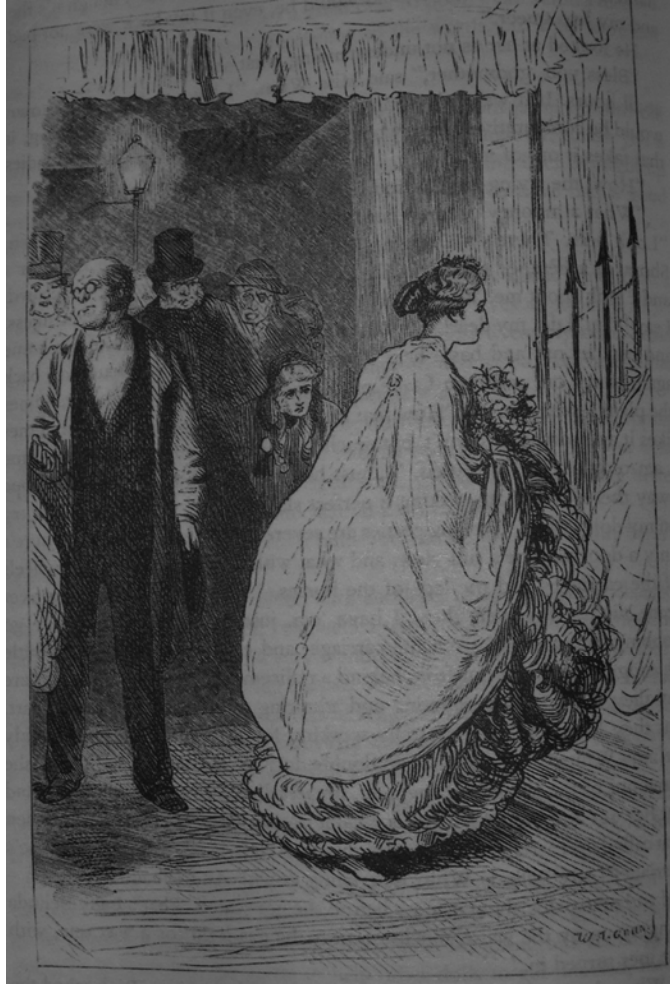


Fig. 2.12. Marcus Stone, “Trying on for the Dolls’ Dressmaker,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

Stone depicts Jenny and Riah in another scene, further aligning the social marginality of these two characters in “Miss Wren Fixes her Idea,” appearing in October 1865 (along with another illustration including Jenny to be discussed below). The interior of the room in which the two sit features little detail, compelling the reader to focus on Riah and Jenny (Fig. 2.13). The scene does include a few objects that indicate Jenny’s trade and physical deformity – namely the doll she holds and the cloth and scissors lying in her lap, as well as her crutches, one of which leans on the table while the other leans on her chair – but almost everything in the image focuses solely on the characters and not their physical surroundings.



Fig. 2.13. Marcus Stone, “Miss Wren Fixes her Idea,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

Riah, whom Jenny dubs her godmother, sits with his characteristically long hair and beard and leans over his cup of tea with head in hand, reflecting the sad state of affairs in the aftermath of Jenny’s father/child having died and foreshadowing the imminent arrival of Mortimer Lightwood bearing the news that Wrayburn lies on his deathbed and requests Jenny’s presence. At the same time, the audience sees the strange mix of woman and child in Jenny, a young girl forced to live as an adult, working hard and frequently caring for her drunken, wasteful father. The title and image reflect this as she continues to develop ideas and patterns for a doll’s dress, allowing herself but a momentary respite to cry for her father:

“I must have a very short cry, godmother, before I cheer up for good,” said the little creature, coming in. “Because after all a child is a child, you know.”

It was a longer cry than might have been expected. Howbeit, it wore itself out in a shadowy corner, and then the dressmaker came forth, and washed her face, and made the tea. “You wouldn’t mind my cutting out something while we are at tea, would you?” she asked her Jewish friend, with a coaxing air.

“Cinderella, dear child,” the old man expostulated, “will you never rest?” (714)

Jenny must remind Riah and the reader that she is, indeed, a child, but she only permits herself this brief act of weakness before returning to her work and caring for Riah by preparing the tea. Though she goes on to say that she does not think of “cutting out a pattern” as work, we wonder if this indicates a life so defined by labor that she knows nothing different. The image works on the viewer to promote this idea and even suggests the complexity of Jenny’s character; while Riah’s gesture and expression (at least in profile) indicate his sadness, Jenny looks away from him and the emotional response he evinces toward her work and the world of her dolls. The little doll she holds, a minister, and Jenny’s selfless, hard-working attitude feed into the subsequent illustration and narrative events, including her departure to assist in caring for Wrayburn and the marriage between Lizzie and Wrayburn that will occur at his bedside.²¹ With her father barely in the ground, Jenny heads out to look after another of her “dolls.”

The following illustration, “Eugene’s Bedside,” appeared with the aforementioned illustration of Jenny in the October 1865 installment, and it shows Eugene in the middle of the expansive, white bed as Lightwood sits in a chair to his left (Fig. 2.14). Lizzie kneels by his side on the right as Mr. Milvey stands behind her to conduct the marriage service, and Jenny fills her post at a table situated at the end of the bed. Stone again dodges the problem of illustrating Jenny’s odd physiognomy by portraying her turning her head so as to look toward Wrayburn and Lizzie, admittedly an appropriate gesture given the circumstances.

²¹ In this way, as in many of his other illustrations, Stone still includes the sort of gaming hints at what will follow in the story that O’Hea claims do not go beyond the details of the original wrapper design.



Fig. 2.14. Marcus Stone, “Eugene’s Bedside,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

Once again, the image emphasizes Jenny’s work, evident in the doll’s-dress-making materials present even during these unconventional nuptials, and her role as caregiver and supporter, even if it does not reveal the details of her face. Her abnormally diminutive hands remain visible, hinting at her odd form, while the accoutrements of the sick room cover the table at which she sits. The insight we gain into her character is limited, but Stone’s repeated symbols of her devotion to others and her remarkable work ethic continue to accentuate these qualities that though true to character also hint at both Stone’s understanding of her character in this way and his efforts to use objects to represent Jenny rather than try to draw her features in each illustration. Either way, Stone’s illustrations, despite the disparities in

characters' features that appear at times from picture to picture, create a cohesive narrative and emotional arc, serving as touchstones for plot and character development. The links between these two images featuring Jenny and appearing in the same installment indicate her commitment to others and to her work as well as associate the white clothes of the doll she dresses in the first image with the white bedclothes of Wrayburn in the second scene. Despite their technical shortcomings, Stone's illustrations provide the sort of visual guide and means of connection that those reading the novel desire and need, especially given Dickens's complex plotting with multiple narrative threads.

Mr. Venus

The creation of the "grotesque" character and strange shop of Mr. Venus was the inspiration of Stone himself.²² The fact that he made use of an actual shop in London as his source, and that he frequently used models for his drawings, reflects the more naturalistic qualities of his style in comparison to the exaggerated caricatures typical of Cruikshank and Phiz. It also serves as an example of the extent to which an illustrator not only influences the reader's interpretation of the text but can shape the story and its characters themselves. Stone provided the scene and situation of Mr. Venus when Dickens wrote too much for the first installment and had to find a filler after he shifted his original Chapter 7 ("The Marriage Contract") to the third number as Chapter 10 (see Cotsell's *Companion to Our Mutual Friend* with Stone's "Reminiscences" 65). Dickens first saw the shop that inspired this image when Stone took him to 42 St. Andrews St. in Seven Dials, where they visited the shop of Mr. Willis, a taxidermist (Kitton 199-200). From this inspiration Dickens created the character of

²² For a full description of how Stone came upon the shop and idea and how he shared these with Dickens, see Kitton's *Dickens and His Illustrators*, 199-200.

Mr. Venus and Stone drafted the illustration that brought Venus and his shop to life for the reader.

The resulting image, “Mr. Venus surrounded by the Trophies of his Art,” was published as part of the second installment in June 1864. It appeared with another image,

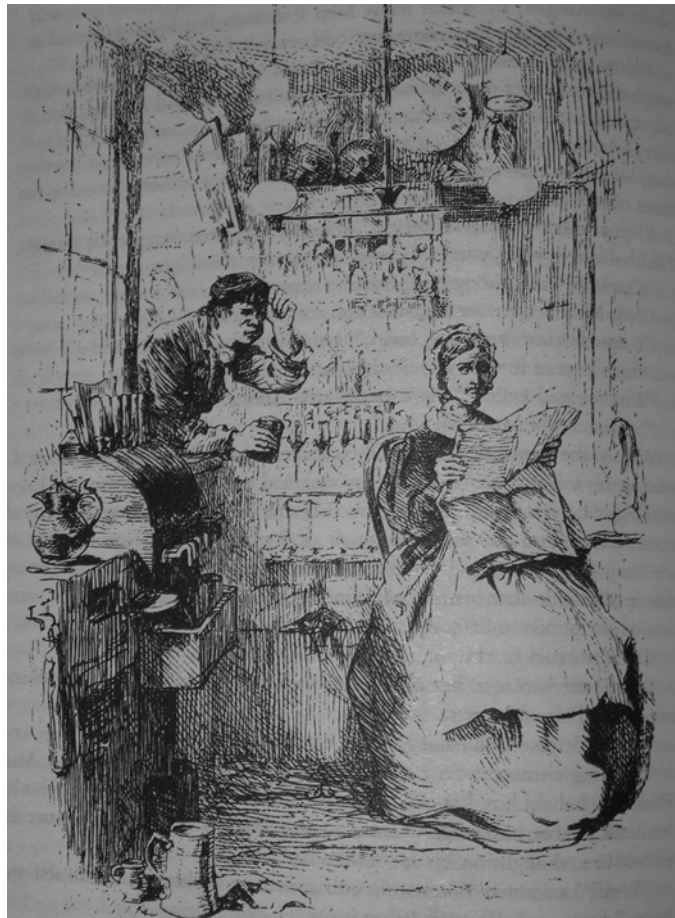


Fig. 2.15. Marcus Stone, “At the Bar,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

“At the Bar,” introducing two of the novel’s other eccentric characters, Riderhood and Miss Potterson, who, like Mr. Venus, appear in the setting of a small, lower-class establishment (Fig. 2.15). In the case of Mr. Venus, the setting is that of his odd taxidermy business, where he works as “Preserver of Animals and Birds” and “Articulator of human bones” (89), as stated on his business card. The illustration also shows Silas Wegg, here seen from the back taking tea as a boy pays for and retrieves his stuffed canary from Mr. Venus (Fig. 2.16).



Fig. 2.16. Marcus Stone, “Mr. Venus surrounded by the Trophies of his Art,” from *Our Mutual Friend*, (1864-65), by Charles Dickens.

While the details of the setting, including the window in the background and the items on the shelves in the shop, may not be clearly delineated (possibly reflecting the novelty of this medium and the engraving process for Stone), elements indicating Mr. Venus’s strange work can still be seen. For example, the viewer can make out the “Hindoo baby in a bottle, curved up with his big head tucked under him” (84) above the fireplace as well as the human skeleton (in pieces) and stuffed monkey in the left foreground, all of which are symbols of Venus’s trade. The absence of some detail in the setting, though perhaps hinting at Stone’s technical limitations, functions for the reader to underscore the physical appearance and sensation of the space as Wegg experiences it upon entering:

...Mr. Wegg selects one dark shop-window with a tallow candle dimly burning in it, surrounded by a muddle of objects vaguely resembling pieces of leather and dry stick, but among which nothing is resolvable into anything distinct, save the candle itself in its old tin candlestick, and two preserved frogs fighting a small-sword duel. Stumping with fresh vigour, he goes in at the dark greasy entry, pushes a little greasy dark reluctant side-door, and follows the door into the little dark greasy shop. It is so dark that nothing can

be made out in it, over a little counter, but another tallow candle in another old tin candlestick, close to the face of a man stooping low in a chair. (83)

In fact, it takes Wegg some time to make out anything in the shop, as “little by little, the black shelves and nooks and corners begin to appear, and Wegg gradually acquires an imperfect notion that over against him on the chimney-piece is a Hindoo baby in a bottle” (84). Whether or not the cause of the image’s rough, hazy style results from Stone’s inexperience, the effect of these qualities in the illustration enhances the reader’s understanding and imagining of the scene and context.

Even if viewers lament the absence of assorted, detailed curiosities in Mr. Venus’s shop, as Cayzer suggests, they once again acknowledge the centrality of human relational dynamics and individual character over physical space that characterize Stone’s illustrations. His emphasis on individuals and their relationships, as well as his attempts to foreshadow coming events in the story, reflect two potentially dueling aspects of his work: first, the more naturalistic technical style that Dickens sought to revive and update the illustrations that would accompany his work and its new style; and second, Stone’s attempt to visually convey the emotion and sentimentality that Cayzer suggests characterized Dickens’s earlier work (3).

* * *

From the perspective of the Victorian reader, illustrations served both an aesthetic and a practical function, and for this reason, as well as their role in shaping and reflecting the creative moment, they are vital elements of contemporary editions and critical dialogue. Dickens’s works, which typically appeared with illustrations or gained them in later editions, vividly exemplify this phenomenon. As Waugh points out in his *Nonesuch Dickensiana*,

“[N]o novelist ever owed more to his illustrators than ‘Boz,’” for “[t]he original Dickens illustrations are an integral part of the Dickens stories, almost as closely allied with the author’s appeal as the text itself” (9). In fact, of the authors in this project, Dickens (and occasionally Thackeray) alone continues to be published with his original illustrations, yet still they remain outside classroom discussion and, at least in relation to this particular novel, on the fringe of critical scholarship. This chapter, however, makes it clear that Stone’s illustrations are integral to the story, providing insight via their strengths, and even their weaknesses, into Dickens’s changing narrative style. In his wrapper design, his depiction of the Thames and frequent river scenes, his problematic rendering of the strange but endearing Jenny, and his contribution of Venus and his shop to the story, Stone clearly influences audience interpretation and expectations through each stage of the novel.

Chapter III

Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* and Illustration "Across the Pond": A British Novel in *Harper's Weekly*

Illustration served both a practical and an aesthetic function in much of the popular fiction of 19th-century England, but for Wilkie Collins the importance of visual art and illustration as tool and point of interest was so great that they appeared *within* the narratives of his fiction as well as frequently in conjunction with them. Such is evident in one of his most famous novels, *The Woman in White*. Walter Hartwright, one of several character narrators in the novel, describes his brief career in illustration as a means of secretly supporting Laura Fairlie and her half-sister, Marian Halcombe: "I get my bread by drawing and engraving on wood for the cheap periodicals" (433). Though like certain other works by Collins *The Woman in White* did not initially appear with illustrations when serialized in *All the Year Round* (November 26, 1859 to August 25, 1860), the fact that the novel's hero and principal narrator works as an illustrator of periodicals is significant. In fact, Walter's illustrating makes the pursuit of their plan to regain Laura's name and rightful inheritance possible. Without this means of support, Laura would not have a home in which to recover physically and these three could not realize their clandestine endeavors. Why does Collins select this profession in particular for the novel's hero? His knowledge of the publishing process certainly makes it a practical choice and one that would give Walter, as he worked on a job-by-job basis, the time and privacy he needed to conduct his investigation into what really happened to Anne Catherick and how to restore Laura to her place in her

family and society. Though Walter refers to his career only in passing and sees it primarily as a means to an end rather than a life calling, Collins's interest in visual art and illustration makes his association of this popular novel's hero with this aesthetic pursuit unsurprising. We see Collins's appreciation not only for the visual but for the artist who creates it and, perhaps even more significantly, for the type of artist with whom he worked repeatedly.

In this chapter I will situate Collins in this historical and creative context by highlighting the role of illustration at work within one of his popular successors to *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone*, and by suggesting the social and experiential significance of these mixed-media works, in this case as formatted in the American journal *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*. Inherent in this argument is the importance of reclaiming these images for the reader of today. The chapter is organized into three sections which address the following topics: Collins's sympathetic portrayal of the Indian characters and their visual realization in an American journal, discrepancies between the illustrations and Collins's story and how these variations impact the reading experience, and the relationship among the various images within *Harper's Weekly*, which I suggest function as an overarching visual narrative that reflects the implicit omniscient narrator driving Collins's text and its various narrative voices. Attention to Collins's personal history and interest in the visual as well as to the influence of another writer featured in the project, Dickens, provides an important foundation for looking at examples of Collins's work and its illustration. As a master of the serial format and the illustrated novel, Dickens served as model for his peers, and certainly for the younger, impressionable, Collins. Though Collins ultimately experienced independent commercial success, considering Collins's relationship and creative collaborations with Dickens allows for a more complete understanding of the

context in which Collins wrote and how these aspects of his personal and professional history impact his own mixed-media works. Their work on writing and staging *The Frozen Deep* demonstrates the nature of their relationship and further illuminates the intricate relationship between word and image, in which the visual represents a physical embodiment and translation of text and a dimension that mediates the audience's experience of the story they tell.²³

Under Dickens's Wing: Collins's Early Work with Dickens

Although Dickens had met William Collins in the 1830s when he commissioned a scene of the seashore from the painter, it was not until March 12, 1851, that he first met William's son, Wilkie. Dickens and Collins met at the house of John Forster, where they dined and heard a reading of the play *Not So Bad As We Seem* (Peters 95-96). This meeting, revealing their mutual interest in the theatre, proved an auspicious beginning to a friendship that would be both instructive and creatively collaborative. They would each be asked to perform in the play, written by Edward Bulwer-Lytton and intended as a fundraiser for the Guild of Literature and Art, with Dickens as its star and Collins as his valet, Smart (96)—a fictional relationship that resonated with the early dynamic of their relationship as the more established writer Dickens offered his professional advice and functioned as editor to certain of Collins's works.²⁴ However, theirs was not merely a professional relationship, for

²³ This brief account of Dickens and Collins's theatrical collaboration also reflects Meisel's cross-disciplinary approach, involving painting, fiction, and the stage, as it further complicates and enriches the sense of interconnectedness among media that characterizes this project.

²⁴ They would become all the more intricately connected through the marriage of Collins's brother, Charles, to Dickens's daughter, Kate, on July 17, 1860 (Peters 229). Trying to support his son-in-law, who grew weaker in confidence and constitution, Dickens several years later asked Charles to illustrate *Edwin Drood*, but the

Dickens found Collins's painstaking devotion to his work and his pursuit of life's pleasures to be an appealing combination at a time when Dickens's marriage was becoming a progressively unhappy situation for him (98). Though, as Catherine Peters points out, Dickens always felt the pressure of public opinion while Collins "had made a more or less conscious decision to be not quite a gentleman" (101), the two spent many years working, writing, cavorting, and periodically traveling together. Dickens seems to have even admired Collins's perspective on visual art, commenting that Wilkie "has a good eye for pictures" (*Nonesuch* 2: 754). Though Dickens's later resistance to Collins's multiple romantic liaisons would keep him from acknowledging Collins's attachments to Caroline Graves and Martha Rudd, at least in the early years Collins's moral and sexual openness would prove a rather liberating influence on Dickens, who enjoyed the renown his literary career had given him but also suffered great anxiety about society's expectations and the limitations and scrutiny these entailed (101). Their relationship, then, at least for a time, would be close both professionally and personally.

Their work on an amateur production for the Tavistock House stage of *The Frozen Deep* in January 1857 marked their mutual respect and the degree of their creative collaboration. At a time when Dickens was feeling more and more unhappy with his home life, even writing to his friend John Forster that "the skeleton in my domestic closet is becoming a pretty big one" (*Nonesuch* 2: 765), working on and performing in this play proved a much needed escape. The seed for the play lay in the 1854 account by Dr. John Rae of the tragic expedition to find the North West Passage led by Sir John Franklin in 1845—an expedition that had no survivors. Though Dr. Rae's report revealed that the men on the

physical demands of the process took too great a toll on his health and he never got past drawing an illustration for the novel's cover (Peters 280).

expedition turned to cannibalism, Dickens wrote in *Household Words* that this was not the case, as no Englishman would have committed such an atrocity (Peters 168-169). Instead, Dickens and Collins turned the story into a tale of love, vengeance, and heroic sacrifice. With Collins in the playbill as its author, though Dickens co-wrote the play, and starring Dickens himself (Brannan 1), the drama tells the story of Richard Wardour (played by Dickens), Frank Aldersley (played by Collins), and their love of Clara Burnham. Dickens's great performance reached its climax during Richard's moving death scene; this villain turned hero saves Frank, giving him his strength and returning him to Clara, only to die, starved and broken, having sacrificed his own life for the survival of his rival and the happiness of his love, Clara. Collins and Dickens designed the part of Richard Wardour explicitly for Dickens, who sympathized with the character's desperation and found comfort in his noble suffering. Dickens himself referred to the peace he found in the play's performance, writing to Collins, "The domestic unhappiness remains so strong upon me that I can't write, and (waking) can't rest, one minute. I have never known a moment's peace or content, since the last night of the Frozen Deep" (*Nonesuch* 3: 14).

The success of this production²⁵ distinguishes the play from other similarly amateur productions and so serves as an important moment in Dickens and Collins's relationship. During the time that they worked on the play, Dickens wrote to W. H. Wills to suggest that Collins's connection to *Household Words* become a more formal one, in place of his being paid on a story-by-story basis as he had been up to this point:

I have been thinking a good deal about Collins, and it strikes me that the best thing we can just now do for H. W. is to add him on to Morley, and offer him Five Guineas a week. He is very suggestive, and exceedingly quick to take

²⁵ Collins revised portions of the script in following years, and in 1866 the play returned to the stage, this time with a professional cast. However, these changes were not for the better as the production was a complete failure and a great disappointment to Collins (Brannan 2).

my notions. Being industrious and reliable besides, I don't think we should be at an additional expense of £20 in the year by the transaction. (*Letters* 8: 188)

Revealingly, Dickens seems pleased with Collins predominantly for his malleability and his willingness to follow Dickens's direction. Though Collins later pursued his own path and certainly established his own style, at least in the beginning of their relationship he followed the lead of the more experienced and established writer. Perhaps because of his ambition as much as his respect for Dickens, Collins bowed to the expertise of his senior on the important early project *The Frozen Deep*. Though they developed the idea together, Patrick Brannan points out that Collins apparently did most of the actual writing of the play on his own (32). Of course, this would change dramatically as Dickens modified the script once Collins had completed it. Dickens viewed the completed script for the first time on October 2, and despite describing the extensive changes he made during the following week as "subject to authorial sanction," Brannan suggests Dickens would likely have been surprised if Collins had actually wanted to challenge these changes (34); doing so would have threatened their cooperative dynamic and what Dickens understood to be one of Collins's most appealing traits. Dickens's more established reputation was the one at stake, and he "knew the talents and shortcomings of the amateur cast" and so "tailored the script so that it could be used to attain the effect which he thought desirable and for which he would bear the primary responsibility" (34) – after all, "prominent people were coming to see a production by Dickens, not a play by Collins" (50).

The experience of *The Frozen Deep* marked an important transition in Dickens's career, as he from this time allowed for more complicated heroes in his fiction, and an important beginning for Collins, who gained a great deal from this early professional and personal affiliation with Dickens. It also represents a significant means to our understanding

of the importance of word and image interacting on the stage and, as we have seen with Dickens and will explore in the work of Collins, on the page as well.

Their professional relationship would continue to extend to the stage years into the future, just as Collins would continue to try his hand at writing dramas, a career he at one time hoped to pursue seriously, even at the cost of his literary one. Another play by Collins, *The Red Vial*, failed to draw in audiences, but Collins still longed to succeed in the theatre, as he reveals in the small autobiographical piece requested of him for the *Revue Contemporaine*: “If I had been a Frenchman – with such a public to write for, such rewards to win, and such actors to interpret me, as the French stage presents, all the stories I have written from ‘Antonina’ to ‘The Woman in White’ would have been told in the dramatic form... if I know anything of my faculty it is a *dramatic* one” (qtd. in Peters 239). Collins never did find the success on the stage that he desired or that he found in the medium of fiction, so after several theatrical failures, he returned to what he knew: serialized fiction and the novel. Yet in this medium, too, Collins would continue to explore and make use of the cooperation between image and text in his popular illustrated fiction.

For Collins, word and image were intimately connected through both illustration and visual realization on the stage. In fact, in his introduction to an early novel, *Basil*, Collins defends his choice of “realities” by likening “the Novel” to “the Play”:

Believing that the Novel and the Play are twin-sisters in the family of Fiction; that the one is a drama narrated, as the other is a drama acted; and that all the strong and deep emotions which the Play-writer is privileged to excite, the Novel-writer is privileged to excite also, I have not thought it either politic or necessary, while adhering to realities, to adhere to common-place, everyday realities only. (xxxvii)

Though Collins focuses on the style and subject of his novel here, the passage expresses his belief in the interconnectedness of the arts in a network of imaginative expressions much like

that explored by Meisel in his *Realizations*. We see this concept of connection again in Collins's descriptions of his writing in relation to visual art in other similar prefaces, specifically those introducing his novels *Antonina; or the Fall of Rome* and *No Name*, which I will consider in greater detail in the pages to follow. Of course, practical considerations as well as ideological ones influenced Collins. Many authors adapted their fiction for the stage, especially if they wanted to prevent someone else from pirating their work in the theatre, as was legal at this time prior to more rigorous copyright laws. However, Collins himself had an interest in writing for the stage and, had he experienced much success, would have devoted a more significant portion of his creative career to dramatic pursuits more explicitly. Practical concerns also impacted the illustration of his work, for these illustrations served to appeal to the potential reader-buyer. Driven by such creative and professional impulses, Collins created a path for himself that took him from word to visual art and back again.

Wilkie Collins: A Life Influenced by the Arts

It is not surprising that Collins's work was shaped by the visual image, given that his father, brother, and aunt were painters and that he himself was trained in painting as a boy, though he was in his own words "of the inferior, or embryo order of artists" ("Pictorial Tour" 496). The influence of visual art and its method on his writing is evident in the Preface to the 1850 three-volume edition of *Antonina*, in which he presents his rationale for the book's divisions by likening them to the compositional elements of painting:

By this plan, it was thought that the different passages in the story might be most forcibly contrasted one with another, that each scene, while it preserved its separate interest to the mind of the reader, might most clearly appear to be combining to form one complete whole; that, in the painter's phrase, the

“effects” might thus be best “massed,” and the “lights and shadows” most harmoniously “balanced and discriminated.” (xi-xii)

His conception of his work in terms of painting suggests the extent to which these two artistic forms were intertwined for Collins and bespeaks the richness of these media in his illustrated fiction as it indicates his interest in evaluating and perhaps even directing his illustrators’ work. We see this again in his Preface to the 1862 three-volume edition of *No Name*, in which he justifies his style as one in keeping with “the laws of Art” and claims to have successfully created Magdalen as “a pathetic character even in its perversity” due to “a resolute adherence, throughout, to the truth as it is in Nature” (vii-viii). These claims signify his reliance on art while suggesting at least a modicum of sympathy with certain tenets of Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites.²⁶ All of this indicates his predisposition toward the visual, which, for Collins, was inextricably linked to his writing, in either pictorial or dramatic form. This intricate relationship requires exploring each element to understand the larger whole of the mixed-media artifact. In addition to his personal aesthetic leanings, Collins, like his peers, had to respond to the demands and tastes of his readers. This audience often desired the visual realization of their text, especially in a time when culture relied on what Kate Flint terms “the very practice of looking” and “the visible” (2) and Patricia Anderson identifies as its “increasingly pictorial character” (2). To fully appreciate this, we must place Collins in the context of the Victorian market.

²⁶ For an analysis of other links between Collins and the Pre-Raphaelites, especially regarding his use of certain stylistic and descriptive techniques such as shading, see Sophia Andres’s article “Pre-Raphaelite Paintings and Jungian Images in Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White*,” and Tim Dolin and Lucy Dougan’s essay, “*Basil*, Art, and the Origins of Sensation Fiction,” on the relationship between Collins’s novel *Basil* and William Holman Hunt’s painting *The Awakening Conscious*. For a consideration of connections between Collins and Ruskin see Patricia Frick’s article “Wilkie Collins and John Ruskin.” The anonymous defense of the Pre-Raphaelites printed in *Bentley’s Miscellany* (June 1851) and often attributed to Collins also suggests this sympathy with at least some elements of Pre-Raphaelites, though we know, as Catherine Peters points out in her biography *The King of Inventors*, that his preference in art was a style different from that of the Pre-Raphaelites (89).

Much of the literature of the Victorian period, and especially of the 1860s, the pinnacle of Collins's career,²⁷ incorporated illustration in both periodical and novel form. The success of illustrated fiction during the Victorian period has been largely attributed to Dickens's creative and editorial skill. His scrupulous management of the illustration and marketing of his work greatly influenced the evolution of these cooperative media and the work of his peers, among them Collins. However, Collins is often cast in the shadow of Dickens at the cost of acknowledging his own marketing savvy and appreciation for audience appeal. Collins himself had a keen sense of the Victorian audience and how to market his work. He shrewdly set aside his novel *Antonina* to honor his father with *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins Esq., R.A.* and so gain entry for the unknown novelist via the life of the well-known painter (Peters 76). Collins's awareness of his audience and the power of a mass readership is evident in his essay "The Unknown Public," published in *Household Words* in 1858 (reprinted in a collection of Collins's essays titled *My Miscellanies* in 1863). In this piece we see a rather indignant and even haughty Collins referring to an "Unknown Public" that "is, in a literary sense, hardly beginning, as yet, to learn to read" (*Miscellanies* 189). We sense his attention to, and anxiety about, this mass of potential readers. In fact, it was this anxiety that, according to Graham Law, may have compromised the quality of his later fiction (329-332). Clearly, the preferences of his audience impacted Collins and his writing, including its illustration and publication. Though Collins learned a great deal from Dickens, his strategic career decisions show him to be an astute writer and businessman, sensitive to the tastes of his intended audience.

²⁷ It was during this time that he wrote and published *The Woman in White* (book form), *No Name*, *Armada*, and *The Moonstone*.

Collins's Texts and their Illustrations

Tracing the exact stages in production for the illustrations of certain of Collins's works is at best a challenge, but we can see the occasional brief reference to an illustrator in Collins's published letters. We can also look to the illustrations themselves for a better understanding of this image-text dynamic. In a letter dated October 23, 1851 addressed to Richard Bentley, we glimpse Collins's interest in illustration as he presents his idea for a short Christmas Story to be titled "The Mask of Shakespeare"—later changed to "Mr. Wray's Cash-Box"—and his vision for its illustration:

...My idea is that a Frontispiece Vignette and Tail Piece would be quite enough – well done – ordinary mediocre work won't do – work by the famous men is only to be had at a high price; and, as far as my knowledge of the great names goes, not even then to be had in time. I should propose that the three illustrations should be done by three young gentlemen who have lately been making an immense stir in the world of Art, and earned the distinction of being attacked by the Times (any notice there is a distinction) – and defended in a special pamphlet by Ruskin – the redoubtable Pre-Raphael-Brotherhood!!

One of these "Brothers" happens to be my brother as well – the other two Millais and Hunt are intimate friends. For my sake as well as their own they would work their best – and do something striking, no matter on how small a scale – I could be constantly at their elbows, and get them to be [erased word] ready as soon as I should. Should you be willing to try them? – and give them some re[mun]eration – the am[oun]t of which I could easily settle between you and them... (*Letters* 1:73)

Clearly, Collins shows an interest not only in who illustrates his work but how it is accomplished. Such concerns indicate more than just an interest in securing work for his friends and his brother Charles, but also his acknowledgment of the power of an illustrator to shape the experience of the reader. He reveals his desire to protect his authorial autonomy by placing the visual realization of his work in familiar, trustworthy, and even sympathetic hands.

Collins's awareness of and participation in the mechanics of serial publication and the illustration of his work, though not as extensive as Dickens's, appears in his letters regarding *The Moonstone* as well. In a letter to "Messrs Harper and Brothers" dated November 12, 1867, Collins refers to the coming simultaneous publication of installments "on both sides of the Atlantic" and encloses with his note "a first portion of the first half of the MS copy of the story," which "leaves England 50 clear days before the first weekly part is published in England." He also refers to the printed proofs that will follow and mentions his "alterations" to the text—"alterations" which, "though important in a literary point of view – are not likely to [embarrass] the illustrator" as "[t]hey are alterations in the form only. The substance of the book (as presenting subjects for illustration) will remain the same in MS as in print." Collins then identifies Dickens, the experienced editor, as en route to America and prepared to articulate anything he (Collins) "may have omitted" (*Letters* 2: 298).

Following the publication of the initial installments, Collins, in a letter dated January 30, 1868, addresses the Harper brothers again with his revisions and comments. It is clear from the letter that Collins, at least at this point in his dealings with the American publishers, is quite pleased with their willingness to accommodate him (*Letters* 2: 304-5). Of course, by this time Collins has proved himself as a popular writer, one who will draw audiences to the Harpers' magazine, making the publishers likely more willing to bow to his wishes. In this letter, Collins refers to the weekly parts that accompany his note and indicates his plan to pass along the necessary information regarding subject matter for the illustrator: "After the next two or three weekly portions, I shall hope to be able to send you, beforehand, a list of subjects for the artist, referring to a part of the story which is already settled in detail, and in relation to which he may feel secure against any after-alterations when I am writing for

press” (*Letters* 2: 305). This letter not only affords insight into the illustrative process, but also illuminates Collins’s thoughts on the illustrator’s work in the following comments:

The two numbers of the *Weekly* have reached me safely. The illustrations to the first number are very picturesque – the three Indians and the boy being especially good, as I think. In the second number, there is the mistake (as we should call it in England) of presenting “Gabriel Betteredge” in livery. As head-servant, he would wear plain black clothes – and would look, with his white cravat and grey hair, like an old clergyman. I only mention this for future illustrations – and because I see the dramatic effect of the story (in the first number) conveyed with such real intelligence by the artist that I want to see him taking the right direction, even in the smallest technical details. (*Letters* 2: 305)

Collins offers his correction in language that, rather than condescending, expresses the writer’s belief in the illustrator’s skill. Despite his dissent with specific details, Collins clearly approved the spirit of the illustrations for the novel.

The Moonstone and Harper’s Weekly

The inclusion of Collins’s novel, published simultaneously in England, was certainly a point of appeal for the publishers of *Harper’s Weekly*, which ran from 1857 to 1916, as indicated in an advertisement for the serial appearing in the paper on December 7, 1867:

We are very glad to announce that the publication of “The Moonstone,” a new serial story, by Wilkie Collins, will begin in an early Number of the *Weekly*. By a special arrangement with the author himself, the story will be printed from his own manuscript, and will be regularly issued simultaneously with its appearance in England. It will be profusely illustrated with original designs by Parsons, Jewett, and others.

Wilkie Collins is now an acknowledged master in English fiction. In that great art of the story-teller, a skillful construction of plot, and the maintenance of an intense and sustained interest from the beginning to the end, he has no rival. The “Woman in White,” which the readers of the *Weekly* will remember, was one of the most extraordinary of English novels; and the opening of “The Moonstone” which we have read is not less striking than that of the “Woman in White.” It has the same crisp, clear-cut description; the same strange spell of mystery, and introduces an element quite unfamiliar

hitherto in the multitude of novels—which the reader will discover in due season—and which the author will be very sure to manage with the utmost skill.

We strongly urge our readers to begin with the beginning of “The Moonstone,” and to follow it carefully as it proceeds, for no stories, from their peculiar construction, better repay serial reading than those of Wilkie Collins. (771)

Not only did the advertisement appeal to the interest of the readers by building up the anticipation of the audience through references to the content of this particular story and the suspense of Collins’s successful *Woman in White*, but it sets up the American publication as being on a footing with that of the English one. In fact, it presents the American publication as superior for its illustrations and “original designs,” something absent from the English publication of the story in *All the Year Round* and a characteristic of *Harper’s Weekly*, modeled on the *London Illustrated News* and *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, and that its editor, Fletcher Harper, certainly prided himself in (Mott 2: 470).²⁸

The editor of *Harper’s Weekly*, who also published the work of other writers, including Dickens and Gaskell, in this project, inserted yet another teaser-advertisement in conjunction with the second installment published on January 11, 1868. In this paragraph, the readers are purportedly united in their pleasure and anticipation, while those not following the story as yet are directed to begin reading this thrilling tale:

Our readers will probably agree with us that the opening of “The Moonstone,” the new Novel by Wilkie Collins, in our last Number, is in the very best manner of the author. The spell begins at once; mystery and superstition; the strange and vivid contrast of ancient India and modern England; the working out in the events of common life to-day of the traditional powers of a yellow diamond—all these are precisely the material

²⁸ In May of 1861 Harper announced that the format of *Harper’s Weekly* would include even more illustrations—something that made the journal notably resemble (and compete with) *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* to an even greater extent (Pearson 93). See Andrea G. Pearson’s “*Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper’s Weekly*: Innovation and Imitation in Nineteenth-Century American Pictorial Reporting” for her discussion of the influence of Leslie’s journal on Harper and the role of illustration as an authentic medium for reporting news, especially during the period of the Civil War.

for the curiously analytical genius and vivid pictorial talent of Collins, and promise us one of the most skillful and exciting of recent stories. The scenes and characters in the first Number are admirably managed. Gabriel Betteredge, the house-steward of Lady Verinder, tells the inmost secret of himself in telling the family history; and the appearance of the three Hindoos upon the warm terrace of the English country house, softly beating their drums and carefully looking about, is a master-touch. Like all Wilkie Collins's stories, the "Moonstone" is written to be published serially, and should so be read. It began last week, and will continue regularly every week to the end of the work. (19)

Adopting and compressing Collins's own devices of suspense, this advertisement attempts to draw in readers as it presents a summary of text that emphasizes both the story's exotic subjects and its endearing characters.

The Moonstone met with mixed reviews, though it certainly appealed to the throng of readers following its progress in *Harper's Weekly* and *All the Year Round*. The negative responses of critics perhaps reflected the still prevalent division between the supposedly high-brow literature of authors like George Eliot and the sensational, low-brow work of authors like Collins who wrote to appeal to the masses. The three-volume edition of the novel, published by Tinsley Brothers in July 1868 (before its completed run in the serial magazines), was lambasted by a critic writing for *The Spectator* on July 25, 1868, who emphasized the weaknesses of this story by offering at least a degree of praise for the intriguing machinations of Collins's earlier work, first by stating that "*The Moonstone* is not worthy of Mr. Wilkie Collins's reputation as a novelist" (881). The critic proceeds, "Hitherto Mr. Wilkie Collins has done his work well, has been among the makers of conundrum-novels something more than chief, the only one whose writing was endurable by cultivated taste" (881), before concluding that "*The Moonstone* gives the impression that he is weary of his own occupation, and puts together the pieces of his puzzle with little trouble and no interest"—something the writer identifies as "a pity, for even toys of that kind may as

well be well made, and Mr. Wilkie Collins has it in him to be the very best puzzle-maker in the world” (882). Though the critic for *The Spectator* may be right in pointing out some of the mechanical and stylistic weaknesses of Collins’s novel, the review reveals just as much, if not more, about the critic’s own bias against the *type* of novel under consideration, and “puzzle-making” literature in general, as about *The Moonstone* and its author.

In contrast to this, another review of the three-volume edition dated July 25, 1868, and published in *The Athenæum* touches on the same aspect of characterization being “secondary to the circumstances” (106), but here the critic seems to find this acceptable subordination to the intricate and surprising plot that proves all consuming for readers:

Those readers who have followed the fortunes of the mysterious Moonstone for many weeks, as it has appeared in tantalizing portions, will of course throw themselves headlong upon the latter portion of the third volume, now that the end is really come, and devour it without rest or pause; to take any deliberate breathing-time is quite out of the question, and we promise them a surprise that will find the most experienced novel-reader unprepared. The unravelment of the puzzle is a satisfactory reward for all the interest out of which they have been beguiled. When, however, they have read to the end, we recommend them to read the book over again from the beginning, and they will see, what on a first perusal they were too engrossed to observe, the carefully elaborate workmanship, and the wonderful construction of the story; the admirable manner in which every circumstance and incident is fitted together, and the skill with which the secret is kept to the last; so that even when all seems to have been discovered there is a final light thrown upon people and things which give them a significance they had not before. (106)

Though perhaps somewhat sentimental and seemingly overly exuberant in its praise, this review, like *The Spectator* review, demonstrates, even as it suggests its own bias, the sensational appeal of the novel and its power to captivate the reading masses.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the story met with perhaps more positive, though not entirely dissimilar, reviews. A review in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* dated October 1868 suggests that “[i]f there were such a word as ‘story-wright,’ corresponding to the term

‘playwright,’ Wilkie Collins would be styled the one great ‘story-wright’” (712) and includes further praise, albeit somewhat qualified, of the novel and Collins’s talent: “Mr. Collins possesses the faculty, almost amounting to genius, of writing a novel. In the *Moonstone* he has come nearer to success than in any of his former stories. If he has fallen short of producing a great novel, he has succeeded in making a most readable story” (713).

Another unsigned review written for an American publication, this time the December 1868 edition of *Lippincott’s Magazine* (a journal published in Philadelphia that would later merge with *Scribner’s*), offers unreserved praise of Collins’s work and style, even holding it up as a model for others writing on what the reviewer sees as unappealing, and certainly less entertaining, subjects:

He is emphatically a story-writer. He is unrivalled in the construction of an elaborate and intricate plot, and he certainly succeeds in making his readers ‘go on reading, reading, reading, in a breathless state, to find out the end.’

....

The novel that now lies before us is the best that Mr. Collins has of late years given to the world, and we are inclined to consider it, with the one exception of *The Woman in White*, the best he has ever written... *The Moonstone* is a perfect work of art, and to remove any portion of the cunningly constructed fabric destroys the completeness and beauty of the whole....

It would be well if some of the New England writers, who look upon a novel as a mere vehicle for the introduction of morbid and unwholesome metaphysical and psychological studies, or long dissertations on Art—well enough in their way perhaps, but strangely out of place in a story—would study the elements of their art from Wilkie Collins....(679-80)

These varied reviews effectively convey the different assessments of Collins’s body of literary work by both his contemporary literary critics and the many critics and scholars of today, some of whom continue to relegate his writing to an inferior position in the literary canon. Of course, such an evaluation stems from comparisons between literary works that fail to acknowledge differences in creative motivation and style in the way that comparing a

film comedy or thriller to a straight modern drama would be inaccurate. However, the reviews, even the explicitly positive ones, fail to capture the story's appeal to the reading masses, for the novel's popularity not only made it a commercial success at the time of its initial publication but led to at least four editions in less than ten years following its serialization. The Chatto and Windus edition published in 1875 even incorporated new illustrations by Fraser and du Maurier—an editorial decision that emphasizes the popular appeal of images and draws our attention back to the significance of its original illustrations in *Harper's Weekly*. To fully understand the dynamic between image and text in this version of *The Moonstone*, we must first re-construct the foundation that the story itself provides for both the reader and the illustrator.

The Story of the Moonstone

Considered one of the first detective novels, *The Moonstone* was serialized in *All the Year Round* from January 4 to August 8 in 1868, at the same time that it appeared in *Harper's Weekly*. *Harper's* incorporated illustrations by William Samuel Lyon Jewett²⁹ in its serial publication of *The Moonstone*, though it did not gain illustrations in England until the later publication of the Chatto and Windus edition (1875). However, like *The Woman in White*, modern editions of *The Moonstone* rarely include early or original illustrations, much to the detriment of the contemporary reading experience of these works.

²⁹ In *The Letters of Wilkie Collins – Volume 2: 1866-1889* edited by William Baker and William M. Clarke, editorial notes for Collins's correspondence with the Harper Brothers indicate that the illustrator referred to in the text is William Samuel Lyon Jewett. However, an advertisement for the story in *Harper's Weekly* on Dec. 7, 1867 describes the serialized novel as appearing "with original designs by Parsons, Jewett, and others" (771). Advertising the story in this way reflects Harper's efforts to sell issues based on the number and quality of their illustrations. Having followed the example of Frank Leslie and his *Illustrated Newspaper*, Harper persisted in trying to emulate and surpass his predecessor by hiring Charles Parsons and William Jewett, two proven successful illustrators previously in the employ of Leslie.

The novel, intended according to the author “to trace the influence of character on circumstances” (xxiii),³⁰ opens with “The Storming of Seringapatam,” forty-nine years before the main action of the story. This prologue, taken from the family papers of a cousin to John Herncastle, introduces the Moonstone and the exotic elements that will feature in the text. It tells of a final battle between the British and the Mysore Indians during which Tipu, the leader of the Mysore rebellion against British rule, was killed. The narrator tells of rampant plundering on the part of the British soldiers, something their leaders were trying to end, and of his discovery of his cousin, Herncastle, holding a bloody dagger and standing over the body of an Indian who tells Herncastle that the Moonstone will get its revenge on him. Though Herncastle never admits to murdering the Indian or to having taken the sacred stone of the Hindu god, Shiva, (here manifested in the form of Somanatha), his cousin expresses his suspicion of him and Herncastle returns in shame only to one day will the yellow diamond to his niece in a gesture that may be either his own vengeance on a family that did not welcome him or a naïve effort at atonement.

The rest of the story unfolds as a series of narratives from different characters asked to help reconstruct the events of the Moonstone from beginning to end according to their involvement in its story. Sue Lonoff aligns Browning’s *The Ring and The Book* with Collins’s use of this multi-narrative structure (in *The Woman and White* and *The Moonstone*), suggesting that “in some respects, this form is a special case of the dramatic monologue, with antecedents in epistolary fiction and the long declamations of drama” that “transposes to a literary medium the basic ingredients of a criminal trial: the witnesses’ accounts, the accumulating evidence, the final resolution or judgment” (“Multiple” 143-44)—thereby

³⁰ All page numbers refer to the Modern Library edition of *The Moonstone* (2001), with introduction by Carolyn G. Heilbrun and notes by Chris Willis, unless otherwise noted.

building suspense and ultimately leaving the piecing together and solving of the case seemingly in the hands of the reader. Lonoff also suggests that this technique anticipates more modern literature “in which truth is perceived as conjectural and relative and point-of-view becomes a major issue” (159), though, as I will discuss later in this chapter, Collins still moves his reader toward the solution and appropriate character assessment by the guiding influence of a sort of invisible master narrative.

Following the introductory section, which sets the stage for the action to follow, the story begins with Gabriel Betteredge, the house-steward to Lady Verinder who finds comfort and meaning from his pipe and copy of *Robinson Crusoe*. From Betteredge we learn of Lady Verinder and her daughter, Miss Rachel. He introduces the dynamics of the Verinder house and several of the other characters, including the reformed ex-thief now in the service of Lady Verinder, Rosanna Spearman, whose mild physical deformity and melancholy spirit garner the sympathy of Betteredge and so the reader. It is also through his narrative that we meet Franklin Blake, the special friend of Miss Rachel and the family who has returned from abroad and been charged with delivering the Moonstone to Rachel according to John Herncastle’s will. So begins the principal action surrounding the diamond, which is eventually given to Rachel on her birthday, only to be stolen from the Indian cabinet in her bedroom that evening. Though the three Indians, disguised as jugglers, who had been in the area seem at first likely suspects, their having been seen several times in Frizinghall on the evening of the incident quickly rules them out as the culprits. The morning after the disappearance of the Moonstone, Rachel behaves rather oddly, refusing to speak with the detective and treating Franklin, her presumed intended, with surprising cruelty. The great Sergeant Cuff arrives on the scene and, though aware of Rosanna Spearman’s disreputable

past, believes her to be the mere accomplice in a plan by Rachel to pretend her diamond has been stolen. Rosanna, after hiding something in the quicksand by the shore, called the Shivering Sand, takes her own life, while Betteredge and Lady Verinder refuse to accept Sgt. Cuff's conclusion and part ways, Rachel having already left the family home.

Following the close of Betteredge's narrative, we encounter the narrative of Miss Clack, niece of the late Sir John Verinder and an annoyingly pious dependent. From her we learn of attacks on Godfrey Ablewhite, a philanthropist and cousin of Rachel who had wooed Rachel but been refused, and Mr. Luker, the shady pawnbroker and money lender and the man likely to be approached by the thief with the diamond. They are lured to different places and searched by the Indians looking for the diamond, though as yet no one believes Godfrey to be responsible. Through the eyes of a hiding Miss Clack we see Godfrey propose to Rachel, and even though she confesses to love another they both accept the match. We then learn of Lady Verinder's death from a heart condition and follow Miss Clack and Rachel as Rachel falls to the care of her cousin Godfrey's family and they travel to Brighton. However, in Brighton Rachel breaks off her engagement with a not displeased Godfrey, only to have his father arrive and command Rachel and Miss Clack out of his house. From the following narrative, that of the family solicitor Mr. Bruff, we learn the reasons behind Rachel's breaking off her engagement: his discovery of Godfrey's efforts to ascertain the facts of Lady Verinder's will—a will that leaves Rachel quite comfortable from the interest she will collect, but not the inheritance in its entirety. This state of things makes Godfrey quite willing to accept an end to their engagement.

The successive narrative, by Franklin Blake, tells of his return from abroad, where he fled after his falling out with Rachel, and his attempt to find the truth about the missing

Moonstone. In London, Rachel refuses to see him, so he travels to the site of the diamond's disappearance, the Verinder home in Yorkshire. There he meets Betteredge, who informs him of a letter written to Franklin by Rosanna and left in the care of Limping Lucy of Cobb's Hole. The letter leads Franklin to the box she had hidden by the shore that contains his nightshirt—a nightshirt marked by the wet paint of Rachel's bedroom door on the night the Moonstone was stolen. He then learns from her letter that Rosanna had hidden it to protect him and bind them together, for she had loved him and it was his lack of interest in her that led to her suicide. Franklin, unsure of what to make of these discoveries, returns to London and makes a plan with Bruff to surprise Rachel at the lawyer's home and so force her to speak with him. Bruff agrees, and from the interview Franklin learns that Rachel saw him come into her room and take the diamond and that she has since loved, hated, and protected him. Their trying meeting leaves things unresolved between them but makes Franklin all the more passionate in his endeavor to discover the truth.

Upon his return to Yorkshire, Franklin tries to see Mr. Candy, a doctor present at Rachel's birthday party who had since contacted him through Betteredge. Mr. Candy, never fully recovered from an illness he contracted the evening of the affair, cannot remember what he wished to tell Franklin, but Franklin finds help in the strange character of Ezra Jennings, the assistant to Mr. Candy possessing a "gipsy-complexion" and "parti-coloured hair" (376). Jennings, himself an opium addict and familiar with its effects, hears of the events of the evening and suggests that, based on his piecing together of Mr. Candy's ramblings, Franklin was secretly given opium. This action was done at the time because Franklin had complained of sleepless nights following his giving up smoking, and Mr. Candy longed to prove Franklin wrong in his abuse of the practice of medicine. His anxiety over the safety of

Rachel and her diamond would have weighed on him so tremendously that he might have tried to remove it to somewhere more secure—something Rachel had been urged to do that evening. Jennings and Franklin believe they have discovered at least part of the truth, and they decide to re-enact the events of that fateful night.

In the excerpt from Jennings's journal that follows, we learn that he writes to Rachel to secure permission for their experiment. Finding, in Jennings's letter, all of the proof she needs to go on loving Franklin, Rachel agrees and asks to be allowed to participate—something Jennings allows but without the knowledge of Franklin. Ultimately the experiment proves successful in part as Franklin does take the fake diamond but drops it and falls asleep before they can discover where he might have hidden the real one. Their next resort is Bruff's plan to follow Luker and watch the bank where the diamond is likely to have been kept as a guarantee.

Franklin reclaims the narration of the story, and he, Bruff, and a boy nicknamed Gooseberry follow Luker into the bank to discover who will take the diamond back from him. They are thwarted in their efforts, but at this point Sgt. Cuff, now retired from detective work and focusing his time on growing roses, re-enters the action to help solve the case he now knows he never fully completed. They learn from Gooseberry of a mysterious sailor who had been in the bank and who had since been followed by another man—a man they later learn was employed by the Indians. However, they don't arrive at the room of the sailor before he has been murdered and the diamond stolen. After exposing the sailor in the room as Godfrey Ablewhite in disguise, Cuff then picks up the narrative with his report of the facts in which he explains Godfrey's double life, including his kept woman, his spending of the

fortune of a young man for whom he acted as trustee, and his resulting desperate need for a large sum of money.

The final sections are quite short and begin with Mr. Candy's narrative of Jennings's death. Following this, Betteredge briefly tells us of Franklin and Rachel's marriage and eventually of the expected birth of their child—something foretold to him by his ever reliable *Robinson Crusoe*. In the epilogue to the novel, we once again meet the diamond, this time back in its rightful place in India. A man of Sgt. Cuff's follows the Indians as far as a ship to Bombay, while the captain of the ship tells of "three Hindoos" (478) who took a boat and rowed to shore at dark off the coast of India. Finally, from Mr. Murthwaite, a traveler in India whom we encountered briefly in previous narratives, we learn of the diamond in its place at the forehead of the god of the Moon in "the city of Somnauth" (480) and the three Brahmins responsible for its recovery who part "to set forth as pilgrims to the shrines of India," "[n]ever more... to look on each other's faces" (481). It is a tale wrought with the machinations of plot and suspense in the intriguing format of multiple narratives—narratives that show various social perspectives in English society as they ultimately demonstrate a degree of anti-imperialist sentiment in their noble and sympathetic portrayal of the Indian people.

The Illustrations for *The Moonstone*

The serialization of *The Moonstone* in *Harper's Weekly* included a total of sixty-six illustrations. Though readers could expect the story to resume the following week, these images still functioned to both remind the audience of previous action and to build suspense by foreshadowing events to come—tools that can be especially effective in the genre of

mystery and detection in which explication and misdirection go hand in hand to keep the reader guessing and enticed. However, in the case of *The Moonstone*, the visual realization of the text is complicated further by the interests and motivations of the author and by the revised epistolary format of the text. The first of these poses an especially interesting challenge for an American illustrator charged with representing Collins's Indian subjects according to the British perspective that he represents (and potentially resists) in an American journal. In addition, the illustrator must visually realize characters and events in ways that will guide the reader through the myriad narratives of the story—a challenge in this case that often results in the illustrator's manipulation (and even misrepresentation) of characters for the sake of directing readers. Finally, the consistency of these images, as they guide the reader, functions as a sort of visual meta-narrative influencing the overall trajectory of the story. Each of these elements represents an intriguing part of the mixed-media artifact we have lost track of in contemporary editions but that will be explored and reclaimed in the analysis that follows.

The Indian and Collins's Anti-Imperialist Sentiment

One of the most striking aspects of Collins's novel is his sympathetic portrayal of the Indians and the elements of Indian culture and tradition that feature in the story, something various critics have noted in their analysis of the text. The fact that this portrayal of the Indian comes at a time in history when England was one of the largest world powers, possessing imperial control over colonies around the globe, makes Collins's somewhat anti-imperialist perspective all the more significant and noteworthy. During Queen Victoria's reign, England amassed colonies and gained immense commercial power. John R. Reed, the

earliest proponent of reading Collins's text as an explicit critique of English imperialism in his "English Imperialism and the Unacknowledged Crime of *The Moonstone*," may be too heavy handed in attributing Collins's social and political motives, but he does highlight Collins's at least somewhat sympathetic depiction of the Indians. In Collins's unflattering depiction of the English and the domestic, the "obstrusively respectable" (Reed 282) mounts a more aggressive, though implicit, critique of British imperialism than does his overly sympathetic and positive portrayal of the Indian subjects.³¹ Reed points out in "The Stories of *The Moonstone*," "in Collins' world no black and white design lasts" since three admirable and sympathetic characters, Rosanna Spearman, Limping Lucy, and Ezra Jennings, fail to have their dreams realized and suffer great disappointment on the fringes of society. Ultimately, though, each character's, and each culture's, "superstition is confirmed"—something that Reed argues proves to be the true subject of Collins's story (99). Reed accurately describes here Collins's elevation of the Indian through the lowering of the English, an act that itself belies Collins's English prejudice, as realized in his portrayal of the capacity for both degradation and beauty common to *all* humanity. Timothy L. Carens revises this interpretation of Collins's text and its anti-imperialism by suggesting that he does not defend the Indian but rather shows the English to be just as corruptible: "Although Collins does not directly dispute prevailing assumptions about Indians, he does question the extent to which 'the English character' differs from its ungovernable colonial counterpart"

³¹ Mark M. Hennelly, Jr., in his essay "Detecting Collins' Diamond: From Serpentstone to Moonstone," traces Collins's sources for the story but also suggests that the Indian and English represent the coming together of two different but related types of fiction, which he describes as a "remarkable meeting between the mysterious Indian Diamond and the familiar English house, or between detective Fiction and mainstream fiction" (26). For a discussion of this relationship and the origins and development of the role of the Diamond as well, see Hennelly's article.

(239).³² Carens effectively ties this interpretation back to the climax of the story and the unveiling of the real thief as well as to the structure of the story as a whole:

The scene of Ablewhite's unmasking emblematically captures the larger symbolic and thematic structure of *The Moonstone*, which strips the foreign disguise from the face of familiar passions. The uncanny logic of the novel repeatedly subverts prevailing assumptions about differences between English selves and Indian others. The irrational superstitions, idolatrous obsessions, and acquisitive desires that Victorians associate with the volatile colony come spilling back across the lines of demarcation, ironically arising within the "quiet English house" itself. (258)

Carens's insightful and compelling assessment, however, does not fully appreciate Collins's portrayal of the Indians and the repercussions of his depiction of each culture. In critiquing the English (and humanity as a whole), Collins implies his broader understanding of the Indian peoples and compels readers to re-examine themselves (and so the Indians) as well.³³

Though a degree of Western bias certainly characterizes Collins's novel,³⁴ his effort to equalize both peoples while still maintaining their cultural differences is remarkable given his social and historical context. As Lonoff suggests, the details of Indian culture would not have been familiar to much of its original audience, but India as subject (in both the imperial

³² Carens claims that "Collins anticipates insights developed by Freud in 'The Uncanny' (1919)" by "disclosing an ungovernable 'darkness' native to the English self" and suggesting that the threat, or at least the only threat, does not come from the wilds outside but can be found within, in this case in the space of the English domestic, and that the real source of fear is not the Indian other but "the secret familiarity of their impulses and behavior" (240). Elisabeth Rose Gruner argues for a similar interpretation as related specifically to the English family in "Family Secrets and the Mysteries of *The Moonstone*" when she points to Collins's unflattering response to his question "What is Victorian family, and whose purposes does it serve?" (222).

³³ A. D. Hutter, in his essay "Dreams, Transformations and Literature: The Implications of Detective Fiction," also argues for Collins's "sensitivity to British colonial exploitation" (180) as it connects social and political motives to the format and technique of his writing.

³⁴ Though I agree with aspects of Ashish Roy's argument that Collins's divisionary structure, his "conventional ruptures" of "inside/outside, domestic/alien, sacred/profane," etc., and his bringing together of these in some ways could be seen to realize "the structural cohesion the imperial imagination aimed at but could never quite achieve" (637), I think that Roy's argument is ultimately overly reductive and fails to account for the potential manipulation of these conventions to realize anti-imperialist goals. Collins certainly does not explicitly claim that England is wrong in its imperialist actions, but casting John Herncastle as a villain and demonstrating both the depravity of the materialistic Englishmen and the nobility of the Brahmins at least implicitly calls for an adjustment in the conventionally polar evaluations of the two cultures.

and discursive sense) was certainly familiar. Many British people had connections in India, either through business or military service in a colony that had been officially under the rule of the British Crown for ten years at the time of the first appearance of *The Moonstone*. Although English domination in India had been peaceful for the most part during this time, British people were painfully aware of the Mutiny of 1857. Their awareness of the violence perpetrated by the Indians did not necessarily extend, of course, to recognizing British treatment of the Indian people as prompting the uprising.³⁵ This revolt, in conjunction with the very public 1856 trial of Governor Eyre, who responded to the murder of twenty-two people by insurgents in the Morant Bay colony of Jamaica by killing 586 natives (Lonoff *Wilkie Collins* 178-79),³⁶ makes Collins's at best persuasively sympathetic—at worst ambivalent—depiction of the Indians especially significant.

Certainly the (at least) implicit critique of England's imperialism evident in Collins's story of the Moonstone, a sacred relic that ultimately returns to its rightful place and role in India by the sacrifice of the three noble Indians, was clear to its English audiences, but what would this perspective mean for American audiences possessing their own cultural biases and living in a country competing with England as a world power? And, more to the point for the sake of this project, what would this mean for an illustrator following the content of an English text and trying to make it accessible to American audiences through carefully crafted

³⁵ In what I believe to be a very compelling argument presented in his essay "Secreting Rebellion: From the Mutiny to the Moonstone," Albert D. Pionke suggests that Collins "appropriates the rhetoric of conspiracy surrounding the Mutiny and reverses its imperialistic implications" through "a range of techniques, including temporal and spatial doubling, in a way that forces readers to reexamine Britain's role in the Mutiny" (110). Pionke points out that Collins's portion of his collaborative "contribution to Mutiny literature," "The Perils of Certain English Prisoners," seems "ambivalent" in comparison to the savage chapters by Dickens, his co-author, and that *The Moonstone*, written eleven years later, represents Collins's "fictional challenge" to "[t]his reactionary rhetoric" (121-22).

³⁶ Lonoff describes the public response to the case by identifying literary figures who spoke out on each side of the issue, Carlyle and Ruskin (and most of the British people) siding with the Eyre Defense Committee while John Stuart Mill and a few others spoke out against Eyre and those defending him by accusing him of being far worse than the natives he had killed (*Wilkie Collins* 179).

visual images? At a time when America (like Germany) was only beginning to compete with the great powers of Britain, France, and Russia on a global scale following industrialization and the end of the Civil War, depictions of the dominant English (both respected and resented) by an American artist must be understood in light of this dynamic. Though Collins might have been critiquing aspects of his country's global policy, the illustrator of his work in *Harper's* may have had other charged motives influencing his style and content.

Interestingly, even dual or competing purposes in this case result in a sympathetic portrayal of the Indian. Analyzing a representative sampling of the artist's depictions of the Indians (and things significant to their culture) will allow us a better understanding of how these dual purposes came together in the illustrated serialization of the novel.

Given his audience and cultural perspective, the illustrator for *The Moonstone* did not necessarily feel invested in conveying sympathy for the Indians in the way that Collins must have, but in trying to truthfully represent Collins's text he faced the challenge of representing their exoticism but still allowing for the development of sympathy for their perspective.

Indian characters feature in all three of the images of the first installment, and Indian men or objects appear in a total of ten illustrations. From his own letter to the Harper brothers, we know that Collins approved of the illustration depicting the three Indians, the second generation of Brahmins who took on the shame of lowering themselves by pretending to be men of low class, in this case jugglers, in pursuit of the greater honor of recovering the Moonstone, with the young, English boy "reading" ink to help them ascertain the exact location of the diamond (Fig. 3.1). However, two other images including Indian figures appear in this same January 4th installment and illustrate events chronologically preceding



Fig. 3.1. First full page, from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper's Weekly*, 4 January 1868, 5.

this later moment in the story. The first two, one the small introductory image and one a larger image, are especially significant in that they introduce the story of the Moonstone and its removal from its rightful place and people by the ignominious act of a

dishonorable English soldier, John Herncastle. The artist remains true to Collins's text by depicting the stone fixed in the statue of the Indian god representing the moon, effectively introducing both the intrigue of the exotic and the sacred significance of this artifact to the Indian people—to whom it will return both in the story and in the text's final illustration. Right from the beginning the reader confronts and is drawn in by the exotic traditions and place of India, but the subsequent illustration depicting the death of an Indian protecting the sacred stone at the hand of an Englishman complicates the representation of the exotic as two cultures clash. Intriguingly, both of these represent the "other" to Americans, though admittedly Indians rather than Englishmen were more foreign to readers than their fellow "white" men.

The relationship among these first three images also strikes an interesting note as the picture of the Moonstone acts as a sort of fulcrum or focal point opening up toward the other two images—images that represent man's capacity for depravity in pursuit of the stone. Both images show men dominating another figure, though interestingly in comparison one seems much more despicable than the other. The cold-blooded murder of the kneeling Indian comes across as more deplorable in its selfish motivation, while the Indian men's use of the boy, who unwillingly acts as a sort of palm reader, results from the actions of the previous image and the original loss of the Moonstone. Certainly readers may have sympathized more with the boy as a more relatable victim, but in comparison within the parameters of this single page the murder of the Indian seems less justified. Even though the artist's depiction of the English boy surrounded by a lightness that contrasts with the darkness of the Indians' skin and background dramatically sentimentalizes the scene and emphasizes the boy's innocence, perhaps downplaying

Collins's critique to an extent, the extreme difference between the domination exercised in each image still impacts the reader.

The boy and "jugglers" appear again in a later image, this time when the men entertain the guests at Rachel's party in an effort to discover the location of the Moonstone, which happens to be prominently displayed on Rachel's gown. One of the most remarkable aspects of this illustration is the perspective from which the viewer looks on the scene (Fig. 3.2). Rather than observing the Indians from the perspective of

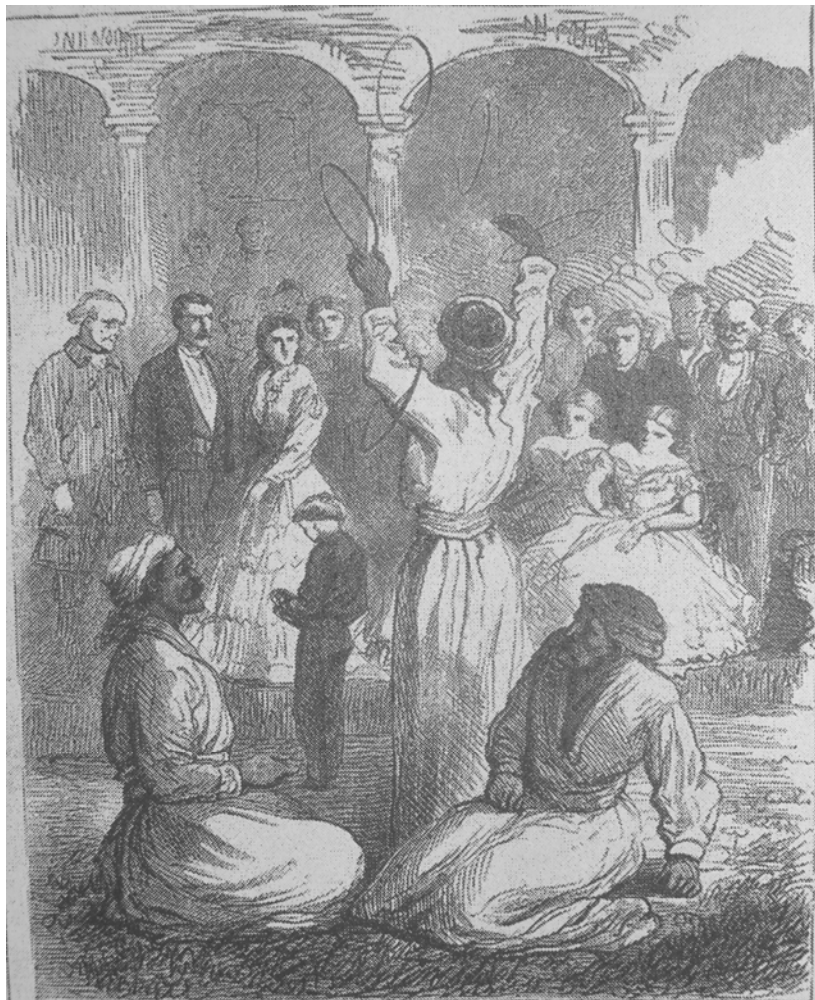


Fig. 3.2. "I can't tell you what tricks they performed, or how they did it," from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper's Weekly*, 1 February 1868, 69.

one of the many party guests crowded outside to watch their performance, we view the scene from an unnatural perspective beyond the Indians looking upon them in the

foreground, with the boy in the middle ground, and the almost indistinguishable guests in the distance. This composition draws our attention to the Indians as the focal point of the image and distances us from the spectators, reflecting our awareness of the Indians' true motives. Here the Indians again appear with darker skin and surrounded by shading that indicates their ethnic origins as well as their disguise and secret motive. This exoticism and mystery, along with the image's composition, make the Indians much more dynamic and interesting than the mass of featureless, English guests who watch them in their multi-layered performance.

In an illustration from the April 4th installment that features the three Indians, they appear on the brink of attacking an unsuspecting Godfrey Ablewhite in an effort to discover evidence of the diamond (Fig. 3.3). Though they certainly appear menacing as they sneak up on Godfrey, their very exoticism makes their actions seem less heinous. In his text, Collins portrays the Indians as noble and self-sacrificing. Although he shows them to be capable of violence in pursuit of the Moonstone, his presentation of their culture and their acts set against the horrible crime by the English that sets everything in motion emphasizes their "otherness" while making their behavior and way of life more easily excused given their very "un-Englishness" (as inherently biased as this may be) and their belief in the stone as sacred. The result is a strange dynamic in which the exotic qualities that highlight Indian foreignness also draw in the readers and appeal to them as something new and different. The artist's image conveys this through the exaggerated dramatic hair and dress of the Indians (not described in the text) contrasted with the unsympathetic image of the weak and suspicious Godfrey, a character whose manipulated image will be discussed later in this chapter. At the same time, the hostile appearance of

the Indians sneaking up on Godfrey heightens the suspense of the moment, appealing to reader interest but potentially compromising, to an extent, Collins's sympathetic portrayal of the Indians. In this way neither Indian *nor* English appears as particularly appealing, essentially equalizing these figures and their cultures, both of which could seem simultaneously alluring and threatening to the American audience. Still, the image captures the exoticism of the Indians which, in the text, elevates and rationalizes their act, while the simpering appearance of Godfrey and the initial cruelty of Herncastle decrease the sympathetic appeal of the English as victim.

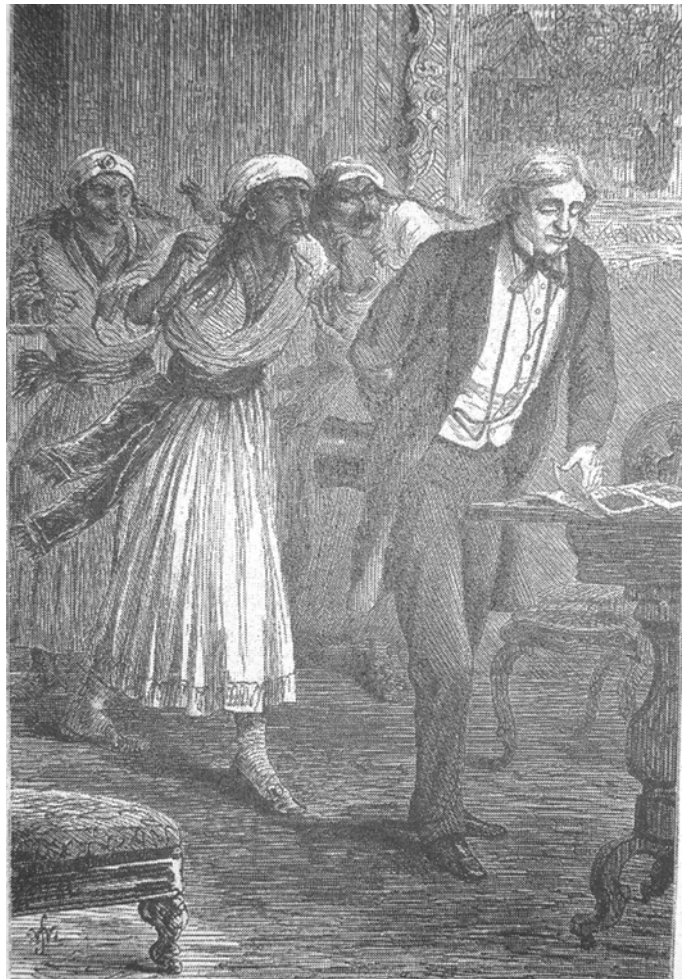


Fig. 3.3. “Without the slightest previous noise to warn him, he felt himself suddenly seized round the neck from behind,” from *The Moonstone*, by Wilkie Collins, *Harper's Weekly*, 4 April 1868, 213.

The final image, and one that even more firmly crystallizes this picture of the noble Indian, features as the only illustration in the thirty-second, and final, installment, on August 8 (Fig. 3.4). The melodramatic composition of the scene stretches the already sentimental cord of Collins's conclusion almost to its breaking point. Collins's portrayal of the Indians at the end of the novel, in the voice of Murthwaite the English traveler in India, further demonstrates his anti-imperialist sentiment and sympathetic portrayal of the Indian culture:

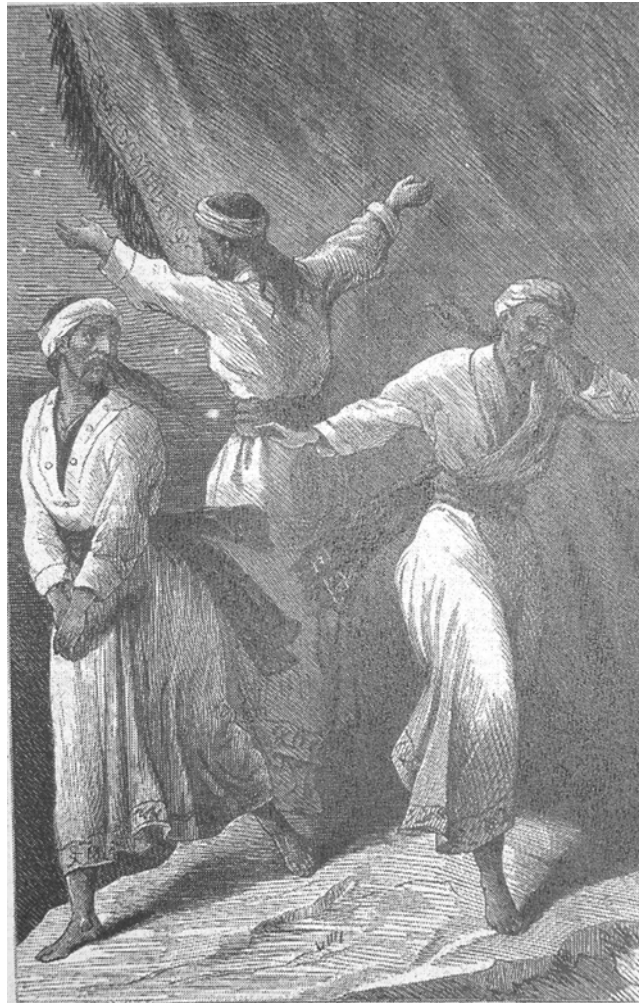


Fig. 3.4. “Never more were they to look on each other’s faces,” from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper’s Weekly*, 8 August 1868, 501.

I turned, and saw on the rocky platform, the figures of three men. In the central figure of the three I recognised the man to whom I had spoken in England, when the Indians appeared on the terrace at Lady

Verinder's house. The other two who had been his companions on that occasion, were no doubt his companions also on this.

One of the spectators, near whom I was standing, saw me start. In a whisper, he explained to me the apparition of the three figures on the platform of rock.

They were Brahmins (he said) who had forfeited their caste, in the service of the god. The god had commanded that their purification should be the purification of pilgrimage. On that night, the three men were to part. In three separate directions, they were to set forth as pilgrims to the shrines of India. Never more were they to look on each other's faces. Never more were they to rest on their wanderings, from the day which witnessed their separations, to the day which witnessed their death. (481)

Though Collins clearly leaves the reader with a moving image of the Indian, the accompanying illustration amplifies the sentiment of the moment, translating the sensational qualities of Collins's novel into the emotionally exaggerated visual image reminiscent of a sort of stage vignette or tableaux vivant. However, illustrations lack the luxury of nuanced text, and this, in conjunction with the artist's attempt to capture Collins's description of the pride and pain of the Indians (or to lower the English by equating them to the Indians), results in a moving image that does not fail in compelling the viewer to sympathize with and admire the Indian. By promoting this enlightened perspective, the image also compels the reader-viewer to accept the loss of the diamond by the English and to praise its return to the statue of a sacred Indian god (a loss and a return perhaps more easily embraced by the 19th-century American reader removed from the historical complexities of English-Indian relations).

An Artist's Re-Interpretation

The occasions when an illustrator deviates from the author's text can certainly prove challenging and potentially confusing for the reader, as these images work against

the content of the story to suit the artist's vision or technical skill. We encountered examples of this in Marcus Stone's illustrations for *Our Mutual Friend*, particularly in his depictions of Jenny Wren, and we encounter similar circumstances in the artist's visual realizations for *The Moonstone*. Whether motivated by personal interpretation, problems in execution, or an attempt to visually revise the text for an American audience, the resulting dynamic between certain illustrations that differ from Collins's own artistic vision and writing proves intriguing and provocative.

One of the most striking examples of the illustrator's deviation from the serialized novel's text occurs in the images of the enigmatic character Rosanna Spearman. Described in the text as unattractive and having a crooked shoulder, she appears quite different in the accompanying illustrations. Rosanna serves as the subject of five illustrations, four large and one small, but in none of these does she appear to have any sort of physical deformity. Neither does she appear as particularly unattractive. For example, in the first of these images, included in the January 11th installment, Rosanna is depicted on the shore, seemingly in peaceful reverie with eyes closed and hands crossed at her midsection (Fig. 3.5). When Betteredge finds her by the beach he "turn[s] her round [his] way" and sees "that she [is] crying" (28). In this image, however, Rosanna looks more peaceful than upset. Portraying her this way certainly avoids the risk of having her look mentally unsound in a way that might alienate the audience, but it also denies us access to her emotional state—access that, even through the second-hand perspective of Betteredge, builds our sympathy for Rosanna. The discrepancy between the image's composition and its caption, "There she was, all alone, looking out on the quicksand and the sea," highlights the artist's illustrative machinations. In showing her

facing us (though notably with eyes closed) and not the water, he compels the viewer to connect with her character but, again, denies access to her perspective and an understanding, even a limited one, of her feelings at this time. Though this detachment may echo Betteredge's limited knowledge of her true thoughts and emotions, it still fails in these various ways to capture Collins's delineation of the character.

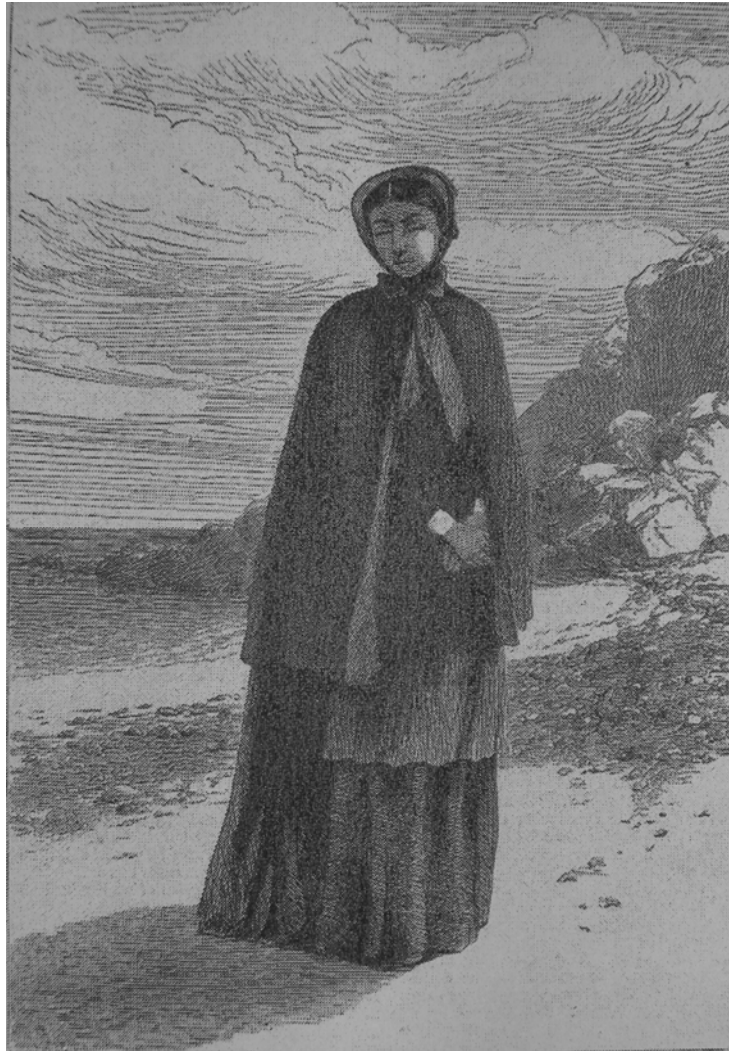


Fig. 3.5. “There she was, all alone, looking out on the quicksand and the sea,” from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper's Weekly*, 11 January 1868, 21.

In later images of Rosanna, however, the artist conveys significantly more through posture and gesture. In the illustration showing Rosanna following her interview with Sgt. Cuff, appearing with the caption “Sergeant Cuff Looked attentively at our

second house-maid—at her face, when she came in: at her crooked shoulder, when she went out,” Rosanna’s physical deformity again seems downplayed by the illustrator, but here her posture and facial expression communicate to the audience a sense of her sadness (Fig. 3.6). This fits with Collins’s depiction of her character and appeals to audience sympathy, while the exclusion (or minimization) of her hunched shoulder makes her seem more attractive to the reader. This realization of her form could result



Fig. 3.6. “Sergeant Cuff looked attentively at our second house-maid—at her face, when she came in: at her crooked shoulder, when she went out,” from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper’s Weekly*, 22 February 1868, 117.

from the artist’s fear of making her seem comical or grotesque had he included a deformed shoulder or hunched back, and it highlights an interesting dichotomy between the word and the image: what makes a character sympathetic in the text may make that same character unappealing and alienating to a viewer looking upon the physical reality of her broken body. In a scene depicting Rosanna as pained and disappointed when Franklin pays her little attention, displayed with a caption reading ““He looks at the

billiard-balls,' I heard her say. 'Any thing rather than look at *me!*',' we are made visually aware yet again of her emotional state through the posture of her body as she lowers her head and draws her arm across her stomach, seemingly in pain (Fig. 3.7).



Fig. 3.7. “‘He looks at the billiard-balls’ I heard her say. ‘Any thing rather than look at *me!*’” from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper’s Weekly*, 7 March 1868, 149.

In this image the artist goes another step to point out the extent of her despair and increasingly irrational feelings by drawing a full moon in the background peeking through the clouds and tree branches outside the window. The scene represented here features in the text only as briefly recapped by a concerned and suspicious Franklin Blake for Betteredge, in whose narrative section this scene falls, and does not include any references to the moon. In fact, the whole incident comes to us in such a second-hand

fashion that we hear of the encounter through Betteredge, who hears about it from Franklin, after the fact and in a different room altogether. This invention of the artist serves multiple practical functions, establishing or heightening the mood of the scene and foreshadowing coming events. The presence of the moon in the background alludes to Rosanna's female passions and foreshadows the climax of her anguish in her ultimate suicide while at the same time reminding readers of the Moonstone itself, "whose very name suggests the commingling of opposites, of changing lunar phases with lapidarian permanence" (Hennelly 32). A previous image, a small vignette introducing the February 15th installment, also suggests her approaching death as her veiled figure, covertly attempting to buy the cloth needed to make Franklin's new nightgown, calls to mind an elongated tombstone (Fig. 3.8). Dressed in black, with her black veil making her head

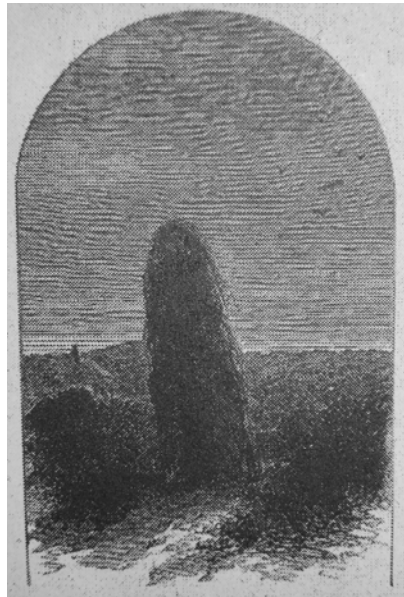


Fig. 3.8. Untitled illustration, from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper's Weekly*, 15 February 1868, 101.

indistinguishable from her body, inside a frame that echoes this arched shape, she represents the grave marker in life that she will never have in death and visually functions to propel the audience forward and prepare them for her sad fate.

Variations between image and text impact the reader's experience of other characters in *The Moonstone* as well, most noticeably in regard to the characterization of Godfrey Ablewhite. Betteredge favors Godfrey over Franklin as the man upon whom he "believed her [Miss Rachel's] heart to be privately set," for "[w]ith all his brightness and cleverness and general good qualities, Mr. Franklin's chance of topping Mr. Godfrey in our young lady's estimation was, in my opinion, a very poor chance indeed" (59). Betteredge delineates Godfrey's finer qualities in an effort to demonstrate his superiority over Franklin (though certainly Franklin holds a dear place in Betteredge's heart):

In the first place, Mr. Godfrey was, in point of size, the finest man by far of the two. He stood over six feet high; he had a beautiful red and white colour; a smooth round face, shaved as bare as your hand; and a head of lovely long flaxen hair, falling negligently over the poll of his neck. But why do I try to give you this personal description of him? If you ever subscribed to a Ladies' Charity in London, you know Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite as well as I do. He was a barrister by profession; a ladies' man by temperament; and a good Samaritan by choice. (59)

The artist's treatment of this textual image can best be seen in two illustrations, the previously discussed picture of Godfrey with the Indians stealing upon him and an image of Godfrey with his arm around a swooning Miss Clack in the May 2, 1868, installment. While the artist captures the effeminate qualities of Godfrey in his long, light hair and smooth face as described (and praised) by Betteredge, the illustrator makes Godfrey appear more spiritless and suspicious than beautiful (Fig. 3.3). His exaggerated eyes, nose, chin, and eyebrows produce an image of a man remarkable more for his lack of physical appeal than for attractiveness, especially when compared to the images of the masculine and mustachioed Franklin, pictured below with Miss Rachel (Fig. 3.9). In the image appearing with the caption "I don't think he put his arm round my



Fig. 3.9. “Miss Rachel then covered the surface under his directions and with his help, with patterns and devices,” from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper’s Weekly*, 25 January, 1868, 53.

waist to support me” in the May 2nd section, even Godfrey’s gesture and posture looking down on the equally unappealing Miss Clack betray his suspiciously conciliatory and patronizing manner (Fig. 3.10). By depicting Godfrey in this way, the artist compels the reader to judge Godfrey negatively and side with Franklin as Rachel’s suitor and to look on Godfrey with greater suspicion than the text demands initially. The artist compresses the plot of the story and denies the audience a degree of suspense by feeding readers visual cues in his unfavorable depiction of Godfrey. Whereas the images could function as catalysts for suspense, echoing the author’s efforts to misdirect the readers and leave them perched on the edges of their seats, here they anticipate hints of what is to follow in the text, exposing them to the audience in these visual keys. The consistency of Godfrey’s images in the novel’s serialization attests to the existence of a visual meta-



Fig. 3.10. “I don’t think he put his arm round my waist to support me, etc.” from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper’s Weekly*, 2 May 1868, 277.

narrative that both reflects the sense of an overarching narrative drawing together the various character narrations of the text and undercuts the authority of individual perspectives as represented in these narrations—something that will be explored further in the following section.

Images in Dialogue – *Harper’s Weekly* Layout and the Visual Page

The relationship between the images and the text in *Harper’s Weekly* differs from that between the other novels and their illustrations discussed in this project—illustrations in publications like *The Cornhill Magazine* in which, as we will see in the

illustrations for *Wives and Daughters*, an image fills a single page, with a quarter-page illustration often appearing amid text. In *Harper's Weekly*, which featured larger newspaper pages, all of the images for Collins's installments appeared on the same page. This format allows the viewer to glance at the first page and immediately take in a visual summary of the section's content and results in a sort of aesthetic exchange from image to image in the physical space of the page.

Most of the installments of *The Moonstone* fill two pages of *Harper's Weekly*, sometimes extending on to a third page of text, and include one small image in the first column of text under the story's title and the author's name, beneath which appear the additional descriptions "Author of 'The Woman in White,' 'No Name,' etc." and "Printed from the Author's Manuscript. / RICHLY ILLUSTRATED." as added selling points. The installments also typically include one or two other larger images, which, unlike this first image, include captions excerpted from passages in the text. In the beginning of its run, as the details of the story and background are being poured out for the readers, the first page of each installment incorporates three images (two larger illustrations and the initial smaller one). At other times the installments include one smaller and one larger image. Toward the end of the story a single, large, central illustration often featured on the first page of the latest part.³⁷ Whatever practical or aesthetic reasons might have prompted these variations in the number of images included in installments, the effect of multiple images allows for the visual relationship I have already mentioned. In contrast, the focus of the viewer on a single image toward the end of the story heightens the

³⁷ The installments dated Feb. 15, Feb. 22, Feb. 29, Mar. 21, Mar. 28, Apr. 4, Apr. 18, Apr. 25, May 2, May 16, May 23, May 30, Jun. 6, Jun. 13, Jun. 20, Jul. 11, Jul. 25, and Aug. 1 include two illustrations (one larger and one smaller image), while those from Apr. 11, May 9, Jun. 27, Jul. 4, Jul. 18, and Aug. 8 include a single, large, central image. The other eight installments each include three illustrations in the arrangement described above.

significance of its subject and brings the visual experience to a center just as the truth of the Moonstone comes to a focal point for the reader. The previously mentioned dramatic final image of the three Indians departing following their successful return of the diamond to its rightful place exemplifies this visual-narrative device.

The ingenious structure of Collins's novel forces the audience to piece together the clues of the diamond as readers tie together the facts of each successive narrative. Each part reflects the biases and openly limited perspectives of the narrators telling their experiences over a specific period of time as relevant to the mystery of the Moonstone. Such a format, in conjunction with the delay inherent in serialized fiction, manipulates reader expectation, intensifies suspense, and puts the audience in the position of the detective. Collins makes the reading experience more interesting, and even humorous, by demanding comparisons between characters as described in the narratives of others and as revealed in their own self-narratives. However, as the reader draws from each narrative pieces of the puzzle leading to the solution, the presence of a director or omniscient narrator propelling the process is felt if not seen. The evaluation of these narratives and the consistencies between them function as a larger narrative presence in the text echoing the omniscience of the reader, the author, and, to an extent, Franklin Blake, the editor figure responsible for drawing together all of the parts after the fact. D. A. Miller, in his essay "From *roman policier* to *roman-police*: Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*," adopts Mikhail Bakhtin's descriptor in identifying the novel as "monological," or "always speaking" with "a master-voice that corrects, overrides, subordinates, or sublates all other voices it allows to speak" (216), in a work whose "monologism quite literally *goes without saying*" (218). The illustrations *show* what goes

unsaid as they reflect this meta-narrative, or monological, strain by remaining stylistically consistent in their depiction of characters and situations in a way that echoes this omniscience. Even amid the textual discrepancies and character idiosyncrasies that occur in each narrative, Collins directs the reader in such a way that, as Miller points out regarding the text, “in every crucial case, all readers... pass *the same judgment*” (215). Though this presence or direction seems only implicit in the text, it becomes visually explicit in the illustrations that accompany it. However, while the illustrations do achieve an intriguing realization of this narrative dynamic, they fail to account for, and fully reflect, the transitions between speakers and narratives that characterize the novel.

One of the most conspicuous examples of this visual consistency conflicting with the textual variations in narrative voice occurs in the illustrations portraying Miss Clack. We come to know Miss Clack as an insensitively pious and intrusive family dependent through both her own narrative and those of others. Preceding her narrative, Betteredge calls Miss Clack’s reliability into question by requesting the reader to “do me the favour of not believing a word she says, if she speaks of your humble servant” (195). With the doubts raised by this request in our minds we begin Miss Clack’s narrative and discover through her own words the cold piety and silliness of her character. We see this as she hides religious tracts (like the copy of “A Word With You On your Cap-Ribbons” that she tries to give to Betteredge’s daughter Penelope) throughout the London home of a sick Lady Verinder and when she feigns complete disinterest in her aunt’s will while making a point of highlighting for the reader her dependent situation. All of this contributes an element of humor to the story and participates in the larger narrative so that even in her own words her character comes across as rather ridiculous and unfeeling

in ways that fit with her characterization in other narratives. Even though the reader takes her opinions with a grain of salt, however, it is through Miss Clack that we learn of Miss Rachel's engagement to Godfrey and benefit from critiques, albeit biased critiques, of Rachel's often tempestuous character. Though not the most reliable source, Miss Clack still functions as a means of information in this reconstruction of the events surrounding the diamond's disappearance and compels the reader to trust in the veracity of the basic facts she describes.

The illustrations that accompany her portion of the story visually represent this larger narrative framework but do not account for the shift in tone and perspective that characterize the section she writes. For example, two of the least favorable images of Miss Clack fall within her own narrative. Although Miss Clack would probably not admit to caring about her physical appearance, a narrative in which she finds herself the persecuted savior and Rachel her fickle, spoiled relative might represent Miss Clack as appearing angelic and Rachel as crazed and self-indulgent if Miss Clack shaped the images. Instead, in her own self-approving account Miss Clack appears visually as an abrasive, wizened spinster—exactly as others see her. In the image depicting her leaning on the chest of Godfrey Ablewhite appearing with the caption “I don’t think he put his arm round my waist to support me” described above (Fig. 3.10), she looks especially ridiculous as she desperately swoons to rest on the equally unappealing Godfrey—a man she greatly admires. Only in one of the larger images appearing in the April 25th installment of her narrative do we look on a scene, at least symbolically, from her perspective—that in which Godfrey proposes to a surprisingly sweet and appealing yet reluctant Rachel as Miss Clack watches from behind a curtain in the April 25th

installment (Fig. 3.11). The rest of the images feature Miss Clack herself, one of them (the small one at the beginning of the April 25th section) showing a disappointed Miss



Fig. 3.11. “May modesty mention that he put his arms round her next!” from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper’s Weekly*, 25 April, 1868, 261.

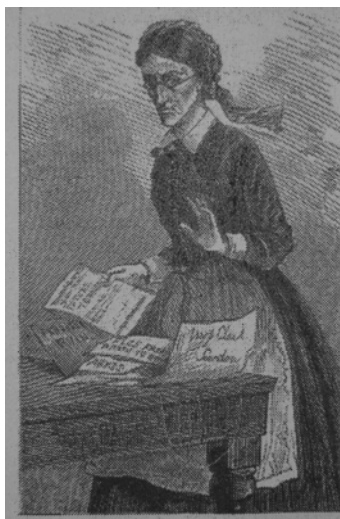


Fig. 3.12. Untitled illustration, from *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins, *Harper’s Weekly*, 25 April 1868, 261.

Clack lamenting the return of her tracts by Lady Verinder and seemingly looking out at the reader with the same judgment and critical eye that she casts on her fellow characters (Fig. 3.12). The majority of the novel's images, like these from Miss Clack's section, fail to account for the intriguing shifts in perspective conveyed in each narrative. Instead, they effectively represent the overarching narrative that allows the reader to accurately re-construct consistent characters and events and hints at the hand of an omniscient narrative presence. While the novel retains a sense of narrative differentiation from character to character according to the perspective and knowledge of each narrating contributor at the same time as it implicitly guides the reader along toward the solution, the illustrations make this directorial role explicit. This intriguing "monological" device itself becomes tangible in the illustrator's visual interpretation and realization of not only Collins's text but of his narrative structure and technique. The participation and presence of a master narrator as explicitly reflected in the novel's illustrations factors into the reading-seeing experience of Thackeray's work as well, though this dynamic is complicated further in *Vanity Fair* by Thackeray's dual role as author-illustrator. Each of these mixed-media artifacts expands our understanding of the intricate relationship between word and image, as well as reflects the spectrum of authorial control and market expectation that characterized the Victorian period.

* * *

Collins himself certainly felt at home in the realm of visual art, and both his subjects and his correspondence and comments regarding the illustration of his work indicate his interest and experience in bringing the two together to appeal to his market of readers. By

the time *The Moonstone* appeared he had already established himself as a popular writer, and this reputation made him an appealing commodity for a journal like *Harper's Weekly*. The desire of his American publishers to satisfy Collins allowed the author to direct and correct when possible, but inevitably the distance and difference between them impacted the serialized novel in critically intriguing ways. Remarkably even these differences—differences based at least in part on cultural biases and individual agendas—work together and reflect the multi-layered qualities of the text and its illustrations. This cooperation of differing perspectives itself reflects the relationship between image and text in the physical space of the page, especially relevant given the layout of *Harper's Weekly* in which multiple illustrations work together to convey the story and even reflect the supreme narrative voice implicitly connecting each separate section into a unified whole. As the illustrator for the serialization of *The Moonstone* in America alternately resists and visually re-creates Collins's text and structure, he assists his American audience as they interpret the story according to their own biases and expectations. Ultimately it is the intersection of these distinct media, visions, origins, and experiences that makes this novel and its American publication in *Harper's Weekly* an important subject as well as a fascinating precursor of contemporary illustrated newspapers and magazines.

Chapter IV

Two Established Artists “Unite”: Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Wives and Daughters: An Every-day Story* and its (Re)Vision through the Illustrations of George du Maurier

Elizabeth Gaskell’s novel *Wives and Daughters: An Every-day Story* received great praise at the time of its publication³⁸, including an unsigned review by Henry James that appeared in the *Nation* on February 22, 1866³⁹:

Besides being the best of the author’s own tales... it is also one of the very best novels of its kind. So delicately, so elaborately, so artistically, so truthfully, and heartily is the story wrought out, that the hours given to its perusal seem like hours actually spent, in the flesh as well as the spirit, among the scenes and people described, in the atmosphere of their motives, feelings, traditions, associations. (246)

Significantly, echoes of these sentiments appear in James’s later comments comparing George du Maurier’s body of illustrative work and the English novel of manners. James describes du Maurier as having “reproduced every possible situation that is likely to be encountered in the English novel of manners.” James writes that du Maurier “interpreted pictorially innumerable flirtations, wooings, philanderings, ruptures”—“[a] lady and gentleman sitting in a drawing-room, a lady and a gentleman going out to walk, a sad

³⁸ For a selection of reviews of *Wives and Daughters* from 1866 see *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Critical Heritage*, edited by Angus Easson.

³⁹ Interestingly, James serves as another point of connection among these artists as he became friends with du Maurier, commenting on his work, and, having begun his career as a writer of short stories and reviews, he reviewed two of the novels included in this project, Gaskell’s *Wives and Daughters* and Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend*.

young woman watching at a sick-bed” – and to point out that “in these drawing-room and flower-garden episodes the artist is thoroughly at home” (“George du Maurier” 344-45).

Though James’s assessment of du Maurier does not focus solely on his illustrations for *Wives and Daughters*, the similarity in his descriptions of these artists, both author and illustrator, and their talent for depicting the nuances of society and the drawing room emphasizes their suitability as co-contributors to this work. Du Maurier’s illustrations for Gaskell’s novel enhance the vivid details of the novel James describes, capturing the aspects of character and Victorian society in ways that complicate and enrich the readers’ experience and that demand the critical attention of contemporary readers and scholars. Broadening the traditional critical approach to this novel to extend beyond the perspective lens of gender⁴⁰ and account for the influence of its illustrations will allow audiences of today to appreciate more fully the richness of Gaskell’s text and its original manifestation.

The structure of this chapter reflects three recurring visual elements, or themes, in du Maurier’s images: the inclusion of a book or physical text as a visual trope, triangulation in character placement, and revelatory cooperation (or contradiction) between illustration title and chapter title. The first of these elements appears in several images as the prominent placement of a book or newspaper that reflects the reader-viewer’s experience, providing the audience with a sort of key to understanding the image and the relationship between reader, text, and image. The second of these relates to the structure of certain images highlighting the relational dynamic between women and men, or women and women, according to du

⁴⁰ Patsy Stoneman suggests in the chapter “Reading Elizabeth Gaskell: The Story So Far and Some New Suggestions,” included in her critical work *Elizabeth Gaskell*, that even this approach involves a reclamation, or “feminist re-vision[ing]” (2), of her work, as her novels lack the explicit exploration of women’s issues such as featured in novels like *Jane Eyre*. However, Stoneman compels us to acknowledge Gaskell’s part in this important dialogue and consideration of women’s roles and position at this time. See Stoneman’s chapter on *Wives and Daughters* in her *Elizabeth Gaskell* (1987) for a feminist critical interpretation of the novel.

Maurier's interpretation of Gaskell's subject. At times these visual interpretations include subtle manipulations of Gaskell's descriptions to suit du Maurier's own understanding and social perspective, and they often suggest aspects of character and plot that have yet to be revealed in the story. Finally, this chapter will contend with an element more distinctly related to the physical layout and experience of the novel when published in its initial serial format by considering how the placement of an image in relation to the adjacent title page works with or against it. Through both misleading and supporting connections between image titles and chapter titles readers gain insight into character and plot as these conflicting, or cooperating, titles manipulate audience expectations and heighten anticipation. This analytical methodology allows for an in-depth analysis of a cross-section of images, displaying the power of illustrations to direct the reader's experience and pointing to their role in the work as its first audiences experienced it (as well as to their significance if reclaimed in contemporary editions). While this discussion will consider only a representative sampling of the large number of illustrations that du Maurier created to accompany Gaskell's installments, it will establish the broader impact of illustration through the close evaluation of a limited number of images.

Gaskell and du Maurier: Their Creative Beginnings

As a woman, Gaskell had to balance many demands in her life, dividing her attention among family, social responsibilities, and her writing. She and her husband lived in Manchester, and together they wrote *Sketches Among the Poor*, published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1837. Her piece on Clopton House, Shakespeare's last residence in Stratford-upon-Avon, appeared in *Visits to Remarkable Places* in 1840, but it was a few years later, at

least partly in response to her husband's encouragement as a way to ease her depression following the death of their young son, that she became more prolific. She continued to write and publish short stories, and in 1848 published her first novel, *Mary Barton*, anonymously. It met with great success, gaining her entrance into greater literary circles that included Dickens, Carlyle, Forster, and Wordsworth, among others. Though she still wrote many shorter works, today she is most remembered for her novels, including *Cranford* (1851-53), *Ruth* (1853), *North and South* (1854-55), *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), and *Wives and Daughters* (1864-66), as well as her biography of Charlotte Brontë (1857). As the wife of a Unitarian minister, Gaskell had to respond to local obligations as well as care for her children and run a home that frequently entertained guests. In *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Artist in Conflict*, Margaret Ganz suggests that these necessities prevented her from reaching her creative potential (23), and Gaskell's letters certainly reflect her frustration at trying to meet editorial deadlines, given her demanding schedule.⁴¹ However, her sphere of experience certainly influenced how and what she wrote. Gaskell's style and subjects reflect what Geoffrey Tillotson identifies, in setting her apart from Ruskin, as her "preference for finding beauty in nooks and crannies rather than in Alps and piled clouds" (*View* 227). In her introduction to the English edition of Maria Cummins's *Mabel Vaughan*, published in 1857, Gaskell describes the access granted readers into the unfamiliar spaces of the home, in this case the American home, via novels as they "unconsciously reveal all the little household secrets," for in them "we see the meals that are put on the table; we learn the dresses which those who sat down in them wear... we hear their kindly family discourse; we enter into their home struggles; and we rejoice when they gain the victory" (vii-viii). Such assessment applies to

⁴¹ See letters 570, 576, 582, 575a for Gaskell's references to being behind in writing *Wives and Daughters* in *Letters*.

Gaskell's own novels and the manner in which their readers feel drawn into the daily lives of their characters, invited behind closed doors and into their domestic spaces. From interest and experience, such subject matter suited both Gaskell and a frequent illustrator of her work, George du Maurier, perfectly.

Gaskell knew the work and styles of the other authors discussed in this project, offering her opinions of them in letters to friends and publishers. She also indicates in her letters a degree of discomfort with the awkward and unwieldy structure of serial publication, which demands the unnatural breaking apart of a story and creative vision. Gaskell knew the medium well, having contributed to Dickens's *Household Words* and *The Cornhill Magazine*, in which *Wives and Daughters* appeared, among others. In this capacity, Gaskell submitted work to Dickens as her editor. She certainly knew Thackeray, too, in a similar capacity when he edited *The Cornhill*. She also kept up with the professional writing careers of her peers.⁴² Her knowledge of the large payment Collins received for *Armadale*, in the unprecedented amount of £5000, compelled her to be, in her own words, "less scrupulous" in negotiating with Mr. Smith and perhaps highlighted what she saw as a gendered bias in the payment of female novel writers.⁴³ However, she did not hold a very high opinion of Collins's fiction, for although she identifies him as one among several "*living writers*" that she believes her friend, Louis Hachette, would like to know about, she qualifies this by writing, "I do not much admire his books myself, but many good judges do" (*Further Letters* 128-129). Such an assessment, although not flattering, emphasizes the fact that popular writers and artists of the period, including Gaskell, Collins, Dickens, and Thackeray, were

⁴² See the following letters for examples of Gaskell's references to Dickens, Thackeray, and the serial format: Letter to George Smith, dated December 23, [1859] (*Letters* 595), Letter to Harriet Martineau, dated September 13, [1861], (*Further Letters* 227).

⁴³ See Letter 582 in *Letters* for her reference to Collins's large payment for *Armadale*.

familiar with each other's work. Considering Gaskell as part of this creative network allows for a greater understanding of the demands and expectations of the reading market as well as the significance of her work in regard to this project. Gaskell also knew and approved of the work of du Maurier, for in a letter to George Smith, dated December 10, 1863, she compliments his illustrations for the one-volume, illustrated edition of her novel *Sylvia* (1863): "I like the illustrations to *Sylvia much*" (*Further Letters* 260). Given Gaskell's talent in crafting richly nuanced domestic dramas and du Maurier's talent for capturing the vibrant detail of dress and the setting of the parlor, these two artists were well suited for one another. Three years after illustrating *Sylvia*, du Maurier would illustrate Gaskell's final novel, *Wives and Daughters*.

George du Maurier did not begin as an illustrator but rather turned to the medium of drawing through a twist of fate. Du Maurier, born in Paris, lived a life defined by duality, from the split between his French and English connections, to his belief in his family's non-existent aristocratic heritage and his childhood of relative poverty. Although his father enrolled him in the Birkbeck Chemical Laboratory of University College, London, to pursue chemistry, du Maurier preferred drawing caricatures of his classmates to learning the sciences, and, after the death of his father in 1856, the family returned to Paris where du Maurier chose to pursue painting instead. The early instruction he received under Charles Gleyre, who taught that lines and drawing, not color, were the foundation for art, may have influenced his later transition to illustration, but it was the sudden loss of vision in his left eye while studying art in Belgium that altered his artistic career forever. The detached retina that likely led to this blindness forced du Maurier to abandon his hopes of becoming a painter, but after much frustration he discovered John Leech's drawings in *Punch* and was inspired to

pursue a career in illustration. In 1860 he returned to London to become a professional illustrator, and that same year his first illustration for *Punch* appeared. Only four years later, in 1864 when Leech died, du Maurier was selected to take his place as a regular illustrator for the magazine. He joined Charles Keene and John Tenniel as the magazine's chief illustrators and happily filled his niche by creating satirical illustrations and captions inspired by England's upper classes. At the same time and in the years that followed, he illustrated books and serial publications for authors such as Owen Meredith, Richard Barham, William Makepeace Thackeray (his favorite author), and, of course, several works by Elizabeth Gaskell, including *Cranford*, *Cousin Phillis*, and *Wives and Daughters*, among others (Kelly 1-8).

Du Maurier turned to novel writing himself in later years, specifically his novels *Petter Ibbetson* (1892), *Trilby* (1894), and *The Martian* (1898). Given this foray into the world of fiction writing and his work as a satirist for *Punch* crafting images and captions, it is not surprising that he professed the importance and potential power of the illustrator and recognized the complex relationship between word and image. Du Maurier wrote of the similarities between image and text, articulating his opinions on the role and power of the illustrator in a two-part article he wrote for *The Magazine of Art* in 1890 titled "The Illustrating of Books. From the Serious Artist's Point of View." He begins the first installment by pointing to the desire of the reading public to have illustrated works, a sort of "felt want" that results in a "majority [that] likes to have its book (even its newspaper!) full of little pictures." He identifies the illustrator's job in providing these readers with "the author's conceptions adequately embodied" (349), and in describing the enduring quality of the images of Dickens's work he highlights the power of his own illustrations: Dickens's

characters “have become fixed, crystallised, and solidified into imperishable concrete by these little etchings in that endless gallery, printed on those ever-welcome pages of thick yellow paper, which one used to study with such passionate interest before reading the story, and after, and between” (350). Here we gain insight not only into the illustrator’s power but into the reader’s experience of illustrated texts via du Maurier’s own interaction with the illustrations of others. Like other readers, du Maurier depends on and appreciates these visual elements not only in the moment of first encountering a text but retrospectively, when he desires to recapture the initial feelings aroused by the reading experience. In the second part of this essay, du Maurier continues to emphasize the significance of illustration, but he also provides insight into the complicated dynamics between image and text. In a drawing he portrays the potential struggle between the writer and the illustrator, who collaborate on an equal footing (Fig. 4.1). He begins this second installment by suggesting certain limitations of the illustrator and by revealing the illustrator’s desire for a sort of visual starting place provided by the author:

What a fine thing it would be if author and artist could always meet in consultation over each separate design! But that seems impracticable! In the first place, they are sure to live as far from each other as possible. And then, which is to wait on the other?

If authors would learn a little how to draw themselves they would not put such difficulties in the artist’s way, and expect the impossible from him, such as that he should draw three sides of a house in one picture, or show the heroine’s full face, tearstained, as she gazes on the lover vanishing in the middle of the background. It would be a great boon if they could, however roughly, illustrate their own work, that the artist might have some idea of the characters and scenes as these present themselves to him who imagined them first. (371)⁴⁴

⁴⁴ As a point of interest given my inclusion of Thackeray in this project and his work as both novelist and illustrator, du Maurier praises Thackeray, a man he greatly admired, in his discussion of the author-illustrator dynamic: “Thackeray, who had a genuine gift of sketching, illustrated ‘Vanity Fair;’ and here and there he has been so successful as to convey a clear notion of the type he had in his mind. His drawing and execution do not come up to the standard of today, but we know what he meant his people to be like. Rawdon Crawley, Lord Steyne, the Sedleys, the Osbornes, Dobbin, Beckey, Amelia—we know them all. And I can conceive no more delightful task for an illustrator (to whom, by virtue of native talent, good training, and long practice, drawing

He describes it as “good discipline” for the illustrator to draw according to the restrictions of the author and his, or her, text, “for the pencil to work in harness” (374). However, he also underscores his criticism of the writer who makes unrealistic demands on the illustrator in a mock exchange from the first part of this essay that has become rather well known: “the humble illustrator has a right to his opinion, since he has sometimes to read and re-read them [the novels he illustrates] so carefully. And if the disappointed author says to him, ‘Why can’t you draw like Phiz?’ he can fairly retort: ‘Why don’t you write like Dickens?’” (353).

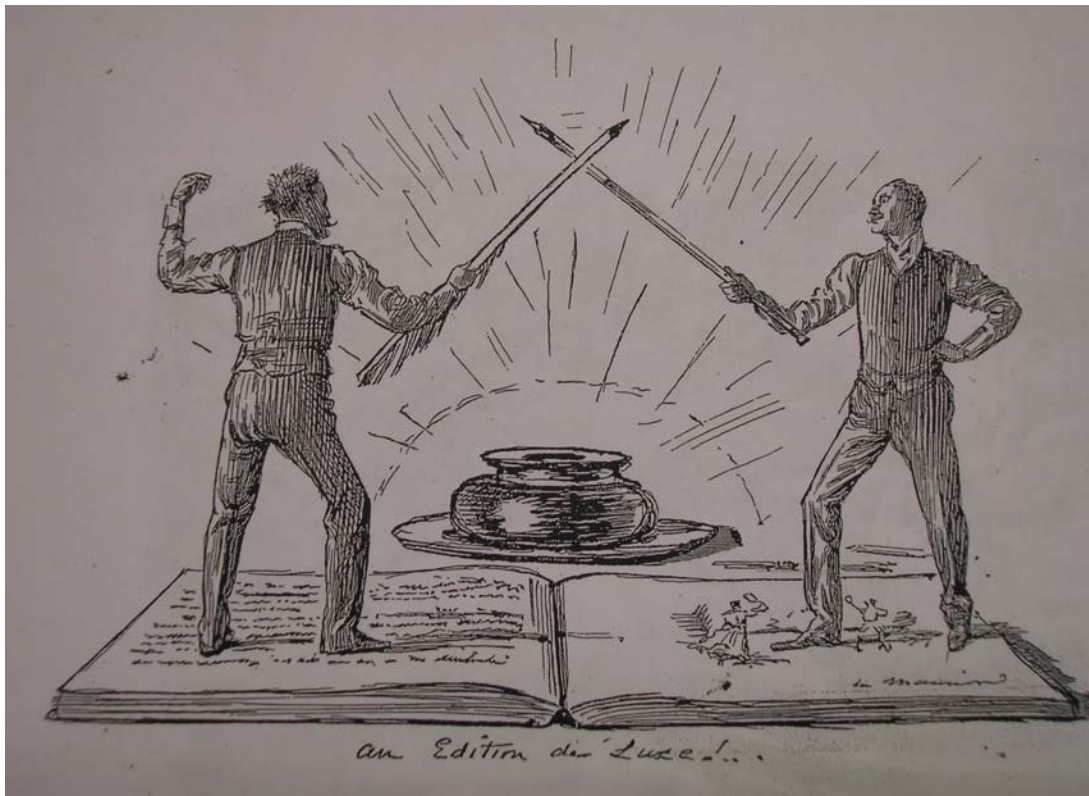


Fig. 4.1. George du Maurier, “An Edition de Luxe!” for “The Illustrating of Books. From the Serious Artist's Point of View—II,” by G. du Maurier, *The Magazine of Art*, 375.

Du Maurier closes his discussion of book illustration in Part II by once again professing the importance of illustration, pointing to its pleasant, reliable, and enduring effects on its

presents no difficulties) than to illustrate what I, and most of the people I know, think the greatest novel of our century—founding himself scrupulously on the author’s own designs” (371).

audience: “The little bird-in-the-hand of the book illustrator is not a bad little bird.”⁴⁵ It pipes cheerfully to a very wide circle, and lays its tiny golden egg with commendable punctuality day by day” (375). Du Maurier’s two-part essay affords a clearer perspective of the illustrator’s struggles, with both the limitations of his own medium and his attempts to visually realize the author’s text, as well as a sense of its impact on the experience of the reading audience. Each of these elements emphasizes the significance of illustration and the need to acknowledge this in our interpretations of the texts they illustrate, in this case du Maurier’s work in Gaskell’s *Wives and Daughters*.

In her consideration of du Maurier’s illustrative talent and how it would be suited to Dickens’s novels, Q. D. Leavis explores du Maurier’s range in style and skill and how these led to his success in illustrating the work of Gaskell: “[A]s we may see from his sensitive and intelligent illustrations to Mrs. Gaskell’s *Wives and Daughters*, he was thoroughly capable of interpreting civilized social life and its painful situations in memorable and moving compositions” (368). Leavis attests to du Maurier’s skill as an illustrator and his ability to visually interpret Gaskell’s text in a way that remains true to its compelling subject matter and sympathetic tone. She leaves unexplored the power of du Maurier’s illustrations to moderate the reader’s expectation and anticipation and to manipulate elements of time, structure, and subject in order to realize these ends more powerfully. Bill Ruddick’s article “George du Maurier: Illustrator and Interpreter of Mrs. Gaskell,” briefly discussing du Maurier’s illustrations for *Wives and Daughters*, attests to the importance of these images and their power to shape the reader’s experience of the text. As evidence of this argument, Ruddick points to du Maurier’s depiction of dress and room interiors, including his

⁴⁵ This adoption of the bird as a symbol for illustration further associates the visual image with the written word, for although in a broad sense it represents the artistic creation, it also brings to mind the use of birds as symbols of the poetic utterance in works by poets such as Shelley and Keats.

manipulation of Gaskell's description of these in the texts to achieve his own vision and to showcase his talent for drawing rich fabrics. Though this relatively short article focuses on such a small aspect of these illustrations, it opens the door for further examination of them, in some ways validating the work as a significant subject and demanding increased critical attention for an aspect of Victorian literature that has often been disregarded.

Though this project focuses primarily on the format and experience of the mixed-media text rather than the collaboration that went into creating it, the moment of reception rather than the moment of conception, if you will, an awareness of the author's response to the images merits consideration. In the case of Gaskell and her opinions regarding du Maurier's visual realization of her text, we do not have a great deal to go by. However, based on the fact that her published letters do not include any objections to his work, we might assume that she remained contented, or at least not dissatisfied enough to complain of them to her publishers. The fact that du Maurier illustrated more than one of her works may also be understood to corroborate this assessment, as does her reference to his illustrations for *Sylvia*. Dickens's level of involvement in the process of illustrating his work cannot be held up as the typical model, and Gaskell's silence on the subject is presumably no less revealing in its implication of approval.

***Wives and Daughters* – A Little Background**

Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, including du Maurier's eighteen illustrations, appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* from August 1864 to January 1866, its run cut short a mere chapter by the death of its author. According to the editor of the *Cornhill* at the time, Frederick Greenwood, "What promised to be the crowning work of a life is a memorial of

death.” He goes on to say that “[a] few days longer, and it would have been a triumphal column, crowned with a capital of festal leaves and flowers: now it is another sort of column—one of those sad white pillars which stand broken in the churchyard” (11). This novel, including elements of multiple love stories but which ultimately seems more about the relationships between parents and children,⁴⁶ has been considered by many to be her greatest work, at the time of its publication and today. The title was likely inspired by that of Turgenev’s *Fathers and Sons* (1862), which also explores the relationship between parent and child. Gaskell’s novel even includes a chapter titled “Father and Sons” about the senior Roger Hamley and his two sons, but much of the similarity between these two works ends there. As the title *Wives and Daughters* indicates, the relationship of women to men, romantic or otherwise, features as the key theme in the novel (Stoneman 171).

Wives and Daughters opens with Molly Gibson as a child living happily with her doctor father, seemingly content in her situation and station, sentiments reinforced by her unpleasant day at the Towers (the country residence of Lord Cumnor) and her later animosity toward the thought of her father’s re-marrying. However, her world and domestic situation soon change, beginning ten years later when one of her father’s medical apprentices writes her a love letter, a letter she never reads because Mr. Gibson intercepts it. Molly goes to stay with Squire Hamley and his ailing wife until this “danger” passes. She eventually meets their two sons, Osborne, whom she at first greatly admires from his mother and father’s high praise of him and his poetical nature, and Roger, whom she initially finds to be rather coarse but in whom she later finds comfort and a degree of intellectual instruction, as well as

⁴⁶ Though this can be gleaned simply from one’s reading of the text, critics have also emphasized this as the focus of the novel: Stoneman associates her interpretation of the story with that of Coral Lansbury and Patricia Spacks when she identifies “the structure of families and the socialisation of girls” as the “central, and important, subject-matter of *Wives and Daughters*” (171).

eventually, love. Once Molly leaves her father's house, Mr. Gibson decides it will help his daughter to have a female influence at home. To realize this plan, he engages himself to the charming, though rather frivolous, widow, Mrs. Kirkpatrick. Molly must adjust to what she sees as her displacement at home and in her father's life, but soon enjoys the addition of the new Mrs. Gibson's daughter, Cynthia, Molly's contemporary who has spent most of her childhood away from her mother, having been educated in French schools. Cynthia, like her mother in her somewhat frivolous and certainly coquettish ways, though much more appealing and dynamic, does not get on well with Mrs. Gibson. However, despite being so different from one another in behavior and temperament, Molly and Cynthia come to love each other as sisters. In fact, Molly sacrifices her character for a time to save Cynthia and help extricate her from a debt and forced engagement to the ambitious and manipulative Mr. Preston. Her secret meeting with Mr. Preston and her passing of a note from Cynthia to him in a town shop expose Molly to ridicule and gossip, but in another interesting testament to the social power of women, Lady Harriet, the daughter of the local lord and an outspoken young woman who admires Molly for her straightforwardness and honesty, resurrects Molly's character and acts as her "champion," escorting her through the town and to local homes of prominent women. Cynthia, in the meantime, has engaged herself to Roger, though she treats the engagement and her feeling for Roger lightly, much to the pain of Molly, who has come to love Roger in her own secret but meaningful way. Roger has since gone to Africa to lead a scientific expedition, and his brother, Osborne, who has secretly married a French governess, dies before ever revealing his marital status or the birth of his son to his father, the Squire. Molly returns to Hamley Hall, the home of the Squire, to care for the melancholy father, who has now lost both wife and son. Eventually Osborne's French wife,

Aimée, appears at the Hall with her young son. Although resistant at first due to his class and religious bias and his distaste for the French, the Squire eventually accepts Aimée, largely because of his love for his grandson. Roger returns, and after receiving a letter from Cynthia breaking off their engagement, he learns of her attachment to a Mr. Henderson from London. Initially greatly saddened by this turn, Roger later comes to see and appreciate Molly for the beautiful, kindhearted, and intelligent young woman she is, perhaps prizing her at least in part for her adoration of him and the reflection of his own guidance he finds in her. He professes his attachment to her father, but, because of the threat of spreading the fever that has afflicted Aimée at Hamley Hall, he is kept from visiting the doctor's home and Molly before he must leave again to finish his contracted time in Africa. The story ends with Roger waving to Molly (and unavoidably to Mrs. Gibson) from a distance as he departs for the train station, leaving Molly to consider his possible attachment and look forward to his return.

Here the unfinished story ends, though Greenwood offers what he suspects will be the outcome for Molly and Roger:

But if the work is not quite complete, little remains to be added to it, and that little has been distinctly reflected into our minds. We know that Roger Hamley will marry Molly, and that is what we are most concerned about. Indeed, there was little else to tell. (*CM* 12)⁴⁷

The editor does his best to describe the ending as he believes Gaskell would have written it, telling of Roger's return to Africa and of the love for Molly that grew within him during the long days apart, so that his feelings for Cynthia became but a distant memory. Greenwood proceeds to reflect on how "charmingly" Gaskell would have "drawn" the scene of their reunion and Roger's uncertainty as to Molly's response, which, he points out, we would have

⁴⁷ This abbreviation represents the *Cornhill Magazine* and is included to indicate page numbers from this serialized publication of the novel.

been knowingly awaiting. Finally, he states, “Roger and Molly are married; and if one of them is happier than the other, it is Molly,” and apart from this strange qualification (perhaps indicating his gendered bias), we have a sense, or at least a romantic hope, that the editor got it right. He even touches on Mr. Gibson, saying that he mourns the loss of his daughter but takes on a partner in his practice so that he has the chance to visit her in London more often (*CM* 12). Greenwood confesses, however, that we can never know for sure how Gaskell would have realized these intentions:

But it is useless to speculate upon what would have been done by the delicate strong hand which can create no more Molly Gibsons—no more Roger Hamleys. We have repeated, in this brief note, all that is known of her designs for the story, which would have been completed in another chapter. (*CM* 13)

This editorial conclusion to her last installment, though perhaps somewhat tainted by its slightly patronizing air of patting the “sweet, little, saintly woman” on the back, gives us insight into the broader perspective of critics in regard to the female author and emphasizes her rising popularity and the high rank of this her last work in the opinion of her readers, as summarized in the editor’s final paragraph:

...It is unnecessary to demonstrate to those who know what is and what is not true literature that Mrs. Gaskell was gifted with some of the choicest faculties bestowed upon mankind; that these grew into greater strength and ripened into greater beauty in the decline of her days; and that she has gifted us with some of the truest, purest works of fiction in the language. And she was herself what her works show her to have been—a wise, good woman. (*CM* 15)

Gaskell had clearly gained the respect, albeit perhaps a qualified respect with an awareness of her sex, of her readers and her editor. Just as the subject and quality of her work were assessed in relation to her gender and its expected attributes, both in terms of what it could add (in the form of innocence, purity, gentleness, etc.) and also how it limited the subject

matter, so her novel *Wives and Daughters* explores this familiar subject and the social and domestic role and perspective of the woman who passes her life traditionally as both a wife and a daughter.

The Illustrations: How to Recognize our Heroine and “Read” the Novel’s Images

The subjects of the three sections of my image-text analysis—the book as symbol, triangular structure, and the position of and relation between illustrations and chapter titles—all impact the reader’s expectation and interpretation. They reveal du Maurier’s complex visual rendering of the reading-seeing experience and his effort to portray distinctly gendered relational and social dynamics. Throughout the telling of this story, du Maurier’s illustrations point the reader-viewer to key moments in plot and development, emphasizing those things on which we should focus and foreshadowing what lies ahead. For example, from just a glance at the first illustration and its caption, “Molly’s New Bonnet,” the audience knows that this little girl will be a primary player in the novel (Fig. 4.2). In her white nightgown and her simple gesture of childlike awe and eagerness as she reaches for her new bonnet atop the chest of drawers, little Molly makes an appealing and sympathetic image. We see her here as a child reaching, a gesture that not only directs us to her physical and emotional development as she matures but hints at the internal desires that we as readers will explore in the story that follows. It is through Molly that we enter, and it is her character and experiences that will become the focus of our attention. This point of connection is established in the space of a moment, even before the reader has taken the time to read and



Fig. 4.2. George du Maurier, “Molly’s New Bonnet,” for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. X, August 1864, facing p. 129.

absorb the text, which identifies Molly Gibson for the first time at the bottom of the first page⁴⁸:

On the drawers opposite to the little white dimity bed in which Molly Gibson lay, was a primitive kind of bonnet-stand on which was hung a bonnet, carefully covered over from any chance of dust with a large handkerchief; of so heavy and serviceable a texture that if the thing underneath it had been a flimsy fabric of gauze and lace and flowers, it would have been altogether ‘scomfished’⁴⁹ (again to quote from Betty’s vocabulary). (7-8)

⁴⁸ This refers to the page structure as originally published in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

⁴⁹ This term is defined in the “Notes” section of the Penguin Classics edition as “Northern or Scottish dialect term for spoiled, injured, damaged or, more specifically, suffocated, stifled by heat or smoke” (653, n. 1).

This first illustration clearly reflects the textual description, but the reader encounters the text prepared with an image and an expectation of both Molly and the course that lies ahead for her and the audience. The sheer scale of the image, with Molly, though a child, taking up a large portion of the page, reinforces her role as the novel's central character. Molly appears as surprisingly, if not unnaturally, "larger than life," suggesting du Maurier's efforts to emphasize her character even at the expense of balanced composition.

The following illustration, though quite a bit smaller, indicates that the axis of the novel, the pivot point around which the various love stories spin, is the relationship between Molly and her father, Mr. Robert Gibson (Fig. 4.3). This image takes up almost an equal



Fig. 4.3. George du Maurer, *Untitled*, for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. X, August 1864, p. 129.

amount of space on the first page as the text itself, approximately one quarter of the entire page, and it depicts Mr. Gibson on horseback with little Molly on her pony beside him. Chronologically this image should not appear here, as this moment in the novel actually occurred before the story opens and is merely recollected by the narrator some pages later. However, by placing it here the illustration points the reader to this relational dynamic between father and child as the focus of the novel and something to note and respond to from the very beginning. Not only the placement but the composition of the image emphasizes their relationship, for these two figures of father and daughter appear as much darker and distinct against a somewhat hazy, faint background. It is as if they are trotting out of the background of the image and the story and into the space of the reader—a visual sign, again, of their importance to the novel and so to the audience. From the start and in but a moment, we know what will take pages and pages of text to learn—two key elements of the story are Molly and Molly’s relationship with her father. Of course, important content and structural elements of the remaining images also emphasize this and continue to moderate interpretation and expectation in the reader.

The illustrator again directs the reader to sympathize with Molly and even visually realizes the narrative perspective of the novel in the illustration “Væ Victis!”—an image that embodies the key elements of structure, caption, and the trope of the book that I will explore in greater detail with the illustrations that follow. This early image faces the first page of the October 1864 installment and page one of Chapter 7, “Foreshadows of Love Perils,” though the image actually illustrates a scene in Chapter 8, “Drifting into Danger.” It shows Molly sitting in a window seat at Hamley Hall, an open book in her lap as she rests her face in her

hand and her elbow on the window ledge (Fig. 4.4). She gazes out the window, which fills half of the page, making only a part of her profile visible to the reader. She looks toward the

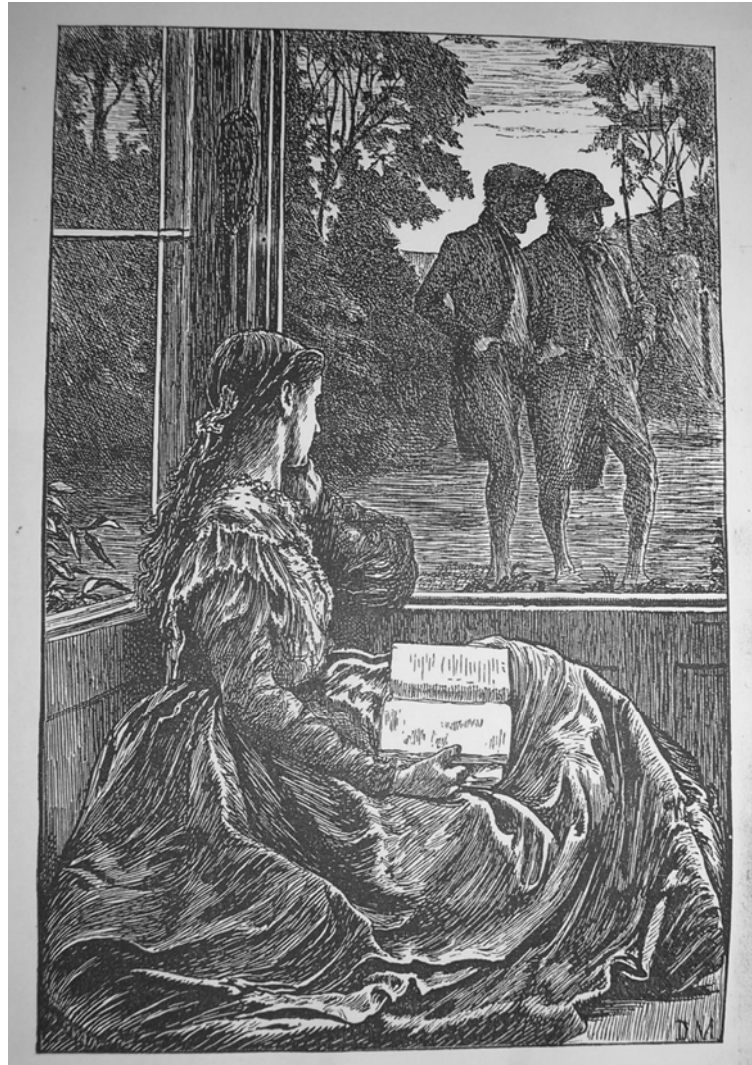


Fig. 4.4. George du Maurier, “Væ Victis!,” for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. X, October 1864, facing p. 385.

two men, drawn in the distance, darker and less distinct than her figure, walking closely together in deep conversation. These two characters, Roger Hamley, Sr., or Squire Hamley, and his namesake, Roger, Jr., appear in the setting of the garden, with trees and hills in the background and grass and shrubbery at their feet. It illustrates a moment in the text that follows upon a rather tense dinner, for Roger has returned from school to tell his mother and father that Osborne, the elder son upon whom his parents’ hopes and high aspirations rest,

has failed his exams and so essentially lost his chance at a fellowship, much to the disappointment of his father:

After dinner, too, the gentlemen lingered long over their dessert, and Molly heard them laughing; and then she saw them loitering about in the twilight out-of-doors; Roger hatless, his hands in his pockets, lounging by his father's side, who was now able to talk in his usual loud and cheerful way, forgetting Osborne. *Væ victis!* (88)⁵⁰

This final phrase, and the title of the illustration of this scene, translates to “Woe to the vanquished” (659, n. 4). It refers not only to Osborne’s failure but reveals Molly’s attachment to the older son, whom she has not yet met, and her judgment in favor of him over Roger, as well as her sense of his being a victim of the younger, in her mind insensitive, Roger, the bearer of these bad tidings. The title of this illustration emphasizes Molly’s perspective in the story, though, interestingly, because of her feeling for Osborne and her initial dislike of Roger’s countenance and somewhat boisterous manner, we understand that her assessment of Roger and the situation is biased and inaccurate. This certainly makes Molly more human, and perhaps more endearing, but it has the dual effect of compelling the audience to keep in mind her emotion and the fallibility that can result from it. Yet the image itself works in other ways to direct the reader’s attention and expectation, even reflecting the audience’s encounter with the story and this very image.

The illustration echoes the experience of the reader encountering the text in several important ways. The open book resting in Molly’s lap, so that the pages with their indistinct lines of writing appear visible to the viewer, reflects the act of the reader taking in the text of Gaskell’s novel. The fact that it has been drawn in a central location of the image and is so bright in comparison to the greyer, darker elements around it, suggests its significance in the

⁵⁰ This page number and future page references from the novel *Wives and Daughters* will relate to the Penguin Classics edition with notes and introduction by Pam Morris and published in 2001 unless otherwise noted.

illustration. Not only does the book reflect our experience reading the story, but we are called to enter the image itself like a book and read the content and symbols embedded in its lines as well. Of course, Molly's holding the book is also significant, for it is her story we follow, it is with her that we sympathize, and to us, readers who have been given insight into her character and desires through the third-person narration of her story, she features as a sort of "open book" for the audience. Her dress and figure, though not her face in this case, appear in the forefront of the image and in the greatest detail, each crinkle and fold of her full skirt distinct and almost tangible as they fill the lower portion of the page. With Molly, we gaze through this window out into the garden, but we also see more than she does, for we stand behind her and take in all. The reader may relate most to Molly and feel the greatest connection with her, but this illustration reminds the audience that we, like the narrator, take in even Molly as subject and object of our attention and our gaze. The title and content of this illustration, then, incorporate the mechanics of the narrative and reading experience and convey the dynamic of the reader's relationship to Molly, the narrator, and the stories they tell. Du Maurier's efforts to depict these visually become all the more evident when one looks to the text and realizes that although Gaskell describes these men in the garden as Molly sees them and describes Molly's frustration at not being able to enjoy the library in her attempts to avoid Roger in the days that follow, there is no mention of Molly's watching them through the window on this particular evening. Du Maurier simply inserts these elements, Molly's placement in the window and the book sitting open in her lap, and so achieves this visual-narrative effect. The illustrator's initiative in this case results in a cross-section of reading and seeing that does not directly translate the text but sheds light on the experience of the novel as a whole.

Reading and the Book as Visual Narrative Trope

Reading material, often in the form of a book as seen in this early image, though also as a newspaper, functions as a visual trope in several other images as well. The first of these following “Væ Victis” appears facing Chapter 37, “A Fluke, and What Came of It,” the beginning of the August 1865 installment. This illustration depicts Molly and Cynthia across the room from Mr. Gibson, who has been scolding Cynthia for entertaining Mr. Coxe's affections and so leading him to believe he might win her hand in marriage despite her engagement to Roger, as the title of the image, “I Trust This Will Never Occur Again, Cynthia!” reveals (Fig. 4.5). The text du Maurier draws on for this illustration includes this line of speech:

Mr Gibson went on looking at his *book* for a few minutes; but Cynthia felt that more was coming, and only wished it would come quickly, for the severe silence was very hard to bear. It came at last.

‘I trust this will never occur again, Cynthia!’ said he, in grave displeasure. ‘I should not feel satisfied with the conduct of any girl, however free, who could receive marked attentions from a young man with complacency, and so lead him on to make an offer which she never meant to accept. But what must I think of a young woman in your position, engaged – yet “accepting most graciously,” for that was the way Coxe expressed it – the overtures of another man? Do you consider what unnecessary pain you have given him by your thoughtless behaviour? I call it “thoughtless,” but it is the mildest epithet I can apply to it. I beg that such a thing may not occur again, or I shall be obliged to characterize it more severely.’

Molly could not image what ‘more severely’ could be, for her father’s manner appeared to her almost cruel in its sternness. Cynthia coloured up extremely, then went pale, and at length raised her beautiful appealing eyes full of tears to Mr Gibson. He was touched by that look, but he resolved immediately not to be mollified by any of her physical charms of expression, but to keep to his sober judgment of her conduct. (405; italics mine)

As in “Væ Victis,” the reading material du Maurier includes in the image appears in a central position and demands our notice, potentially reflecting, again, du Maurier's attempts at instructing his audience to “read” his images as they do a written text, for it, too, includes

symbols and a narrative and so requires careful scrutiny and analysis. In addition, du Maurier again takes a liberty in his visual interpretation of Gaskell's text through his presentation of this element. Whereas in the text Gaskell describes Mr. Gibson as reading a book, du Maurier shows him reading a newspaper. This seemingly small change could have

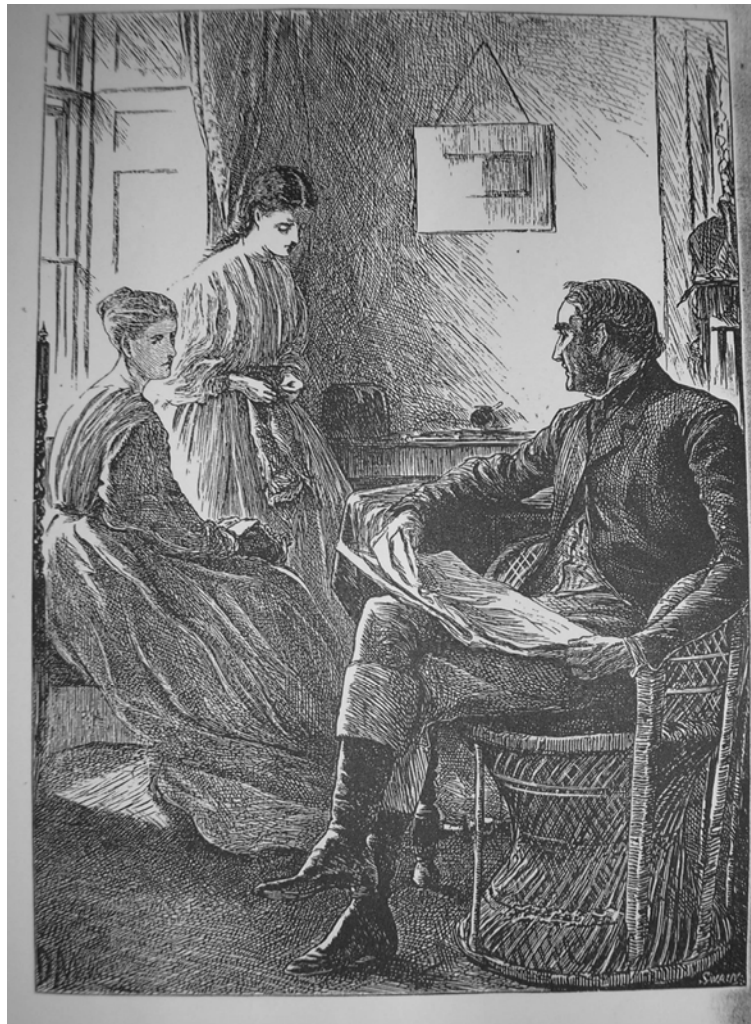


Fig. 4.5. “I Trust This Will Never Occur Again, Cynthia!,” for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. XII, August 1865, facing p. 129.

larger significance as it reveals du Maurier’s attempt to differentiate between the feminine and the masculine and may suggest his own bias in this regard or show his efforts to carry each figure’s character out in every detail as he understands them. The fact that Mr. Gibson holds a newspaper in his lap in the image fits in with his rational, scientific, and relatively

unemotional nature while at the same time distinguishing his interests, representative of the male perspective and his involvement with worldly affairs outside the home, from those of the female with her lighter tastes for romantic novels and mere entertainment and her sheltered daily life limited to the domestic. Such a gendered contrast, however, fails to support Gaskell's depiction of Molly as growing to prefer the scientific books Roger shows her over other books, yet it does function to set Mr. Gibson apart from these two ladies even more dramatically than the text, something I will consider in greater detail later in this chapter.

The small image that appears on the page facing this large illustration, the first page of text for Chapter 37, also includes a character holding, and in this case actually reading, a book (Fig. 4.6). In this illustration Roger appears in the wilds of Africa, hunched over a text



Fig. 4.6. George du Maurier, *Untitled*, for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. XII, August 1865, p. 129.

of some sort, presumably a scientific work, which would be in keeping with the purpose of his expedition, but potentially connected more with the letters he receives from Cynthia. Though the reader knows of Roger's folly in loving the coquettish Cynthia instead of Molly, the text compels its audience to feel sympathy, even if somewhat qualified, for Roger, at least for Molly's sake. This small illustration offers the same emotional directive but through the visual symbol of the book, something associated with two other key sympathetic figures, Molly and Mr. Gibson, as described above. At the same time, du Maurier draws our attention to the physical body of the work at hand and refers to the primary means of Molly and Roger's becoming friends—books and science—as well as her only means of feeling connected to him even now, through the text of his letters, albeit letters to Cynthia:

Molly took the letter, the thought crossing her mind that he had touched it, had had his hands upon it, in those far-distant desert lands, where he might be lost to sight and to any human knowledge of his fate; even now her pretty brown fingers almost caressed the flimsy paper with their delicacy of touch as she read. She saw references made to books, which, with a little trouble, would be accessible to her here in Hollingford. Perhaps the details and the references would make the letter dull and dry to some people, but not to her, thanks to his former teaching and the interest he had excited in her for his pursuits. But, as he said in apology, what had he to write about in that savage land, but his love, and his researches, and travels? There was no society, no gaiety, no new books to write about, not gossip in Abyssinian wilds. (413)

The effort of the illustrator to move the reader to such associations becomes all the more evident when one tries to connect the image to a direct passage from the text: there is none. Gaskell provides us with only Molly's perspective and imaginings based on Roger's letter, making the illustration of Roger one drawn from du Maurier's vision (and perhaps Molly's) rather than one of Gaskell's creating.

This visual device of the book appears again in an image that could easily be paralleled to this one, as it, too, shows a character, this time Molly, holding a physical text in

her lap (Fig. 4.7). Du Maurier potentially created this one, like the other small vignette image of Roger, to be understood as a mirror setting Roger and Molly against each other,



Fig. 4.7. George du Maurier, Untitled, for *Wives and Daughters*, by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. XII, December 1865, p. 641.

revealing their similar interests and foreshadowing their eventual romantic connection. This small illustration appears beside the first page of text in Chapter 55, “An Absent Lover Returns,” (a title, which, in conjunction with this image and its similarities to the previous image further emphasizes the connections of Roger and Molly). The text inspiring this picture falls just before Molly and Roger’s first meeting after his return:

Molly was sitting in her pretty white invalid’s dress, half reading, half dreaming, for the June air was so clear and ambient, the garden so full of bloom, the trees so full of leaf, that reading by the open window was only a pretence at such a time; besides which Mrs Gibson continually interrupted her with remarks about the pattern of her worsted-work. It was after lunch – orthodox calling time, when Maria ushered in Mr Roger Hamley. Molly started up; and then stood shyly and quietly in her place while a bronzed, bearded, grave man came into the room, in whom she at first had to seek for the merry boyish face she knew by heart only two years ago.... (592)

Du Maurier's selection of this textual moment for his illustration not only builds on our understanding of Molly's intellectual pursuits, as inspired by Roger, further advancing our association of Molly, Roger, and Mr. Gibson as central characters of greater reason and depth than many of the novel's other characters, but it reinforces each of these as it parallels the two vignette illustrations and relates to the reunion that immediately follows the description of Molly "half reading, half dreaming." The network then of these images reflects the plot as well as our reading experience in a sort of visual narrative. The device of the book within these images functions as a symbol working at each of these levels, reflecting and directing the reader's experience and comprehension of the story, its events, and its characters.

Triangulation and Image Structure

Another visual device that appears again and again in du Maurier's illustrations, reflecting key aspects of the plot and revealing nuances of characterization as it shapes the reader's experience, can be found in the visual structure within the images themselves. Du Maurier gives us insight into the dynamics, both present, according to related text, and future, according to text the reader has yet to encounter, of the novel's characters and their relationships via their physical positions in relation to one another, often shown in the form of a triangle. The triangle, a common structural device in painting and illustration, and the placement and identity of its elements can offer the reader insight into the action and characters of the novel.

Du Maurier uses this device to highlight Molly, Mr. Gibson, and their relationship in the illustration that accompanies the first page of Chapter 4, "Mr. Gibson's Neighbours."

This illustration, titled “A Love Letter,” depicts Mr. Gibson’s interception of a love letter to Molly from a medical student living in their household and training under Mr. Gibson, a young, red-haired Mr. Coxe (Fig. 4.8). Here the figures of father and daughter appear in



Fig. 4.8. George du Maurier, “A Love Letter,” for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. X, September 1864, facing p. 355.

darker outline, not only more filled in and distinct than the interior setting, with its shelves of crockery, basket, table, clock, and even distant stairwell, but also more dramatically shaded than the figure of the maid and deliverer of the letter, Maria. She fades into the background, not only reflecting class difference and accentuating the key players of this moment in the plot, but once again compelling the reader to acknowledge their relationship as the nucleus of

the entire story. The distinction between Maria and her employers is further emphasized by the apparent texture and color of her dress, which blends into the shading of the wall behind her and causes her to appear as if she emerges from the background and simply recedes back into it. Maria's insertion in the background between the two also foreshadows the growing distance, physical and emotional, that lies ahead for these two. Molly will soon be sent away to avoid Mr. Coxe's advances, Mr. Gibson will re-marry, and by the end Molly will find a love who will supplant her father as the central man in her life, something Mr. Gibson recognizes toward the end of the novel when he thinks to himself, "Lover *versus* father!... Lover wins" (644). The power of an illustration to suggest what lies ahead in its structure and composition is effectively realized in this image; what can be observed from but a brief look at this visual interpretation informs the audience of the shifting dynamic between Molly and her father that will play out through the following fifty-six chapters.

The last full-page illustration featuring both Molly and her father, the image titled "'I Trust This Will Never Occur Again, Cynthia!'" discussed previously, also reveals the growing distance between father and daughter through its physical structure (Fig. 4.5). In this scene, Molly and Cynthia are set physically apart and against the male figure of Mr. Gibson at the bottom right of the frame. The women form a sort of tight base across from the point of Mr. Gibson's form. Through their physical proximity we recognize the association between Molly and Cynthia, as Molly shares Cynthia's secret and relates to her in a new, womanly way that will presumably lead to her own marriage and separation from her father. The use of light and shade in the scene reinforces this; while Mr. Gibson's and Cynthia's faces appear in darker tones to reflect the former's ignorance regarding the truth of the situation and the latter's secrecy, Molly's face appears highlighted by the sunlight pouring in

through the window, emphasizing her as the novel's moral center and the reader's heroine. We see the result of Cynthia's secret and Molly's emotional and physical development as they compel the increasing distance between the two women and Mr. Gibson, who sits apart from them. Here, then, du Maurier ties in past, current, and future events and changes, as well as reflects the novel's representation of social and emotional differences between men and women. Though it may appear at first glance as if Mr. Gibson's body forms an angle opening out toward the two women, on closer examination the viewer sees that he must look back over his shoulder toward them as he sits in front of them, physically facing away from Molly and Cynthia. In fact, his right arm, cutting across what could be the open angle of his torso and legs, shows him to be rather closed off and isolated. This posture indicates his complicated feelings and emotions toward Cynthia and his daughter as it emphasizes both his anger and his male distance and independence in relation to these women. Such elements represent emotional and narrative developments and reflect the social context both within and outside Gaskell's story. While Gaskell may tease out some of these differences in her lengthy text, du Maurier boldly asserts them in his illustration. The image depicts this distinction between the male and the female through tonality as well, as the dark figure of Mr. Gibson sits apart from the light figures of Molly and Cynthia, whose own bodies form an angle opening out toward the bright window. However, du Maurier positions even these two slightly apart, complicating the image further by showing Molly and Cynthia's own gestures, evident in their hands and the different direction of their gazes, as separating them from each other. Against Mr. Gibson and his masculine anger they appear united, but in that one feels hurt and shame at her father's sentiment and the other perhaps feels more pain in being caught, they appear disparate, one the demure, devoted young woman and the other the

fickle, female coquette. Such is further emphasized through the light falling on the side of Molly's face as she bodily faces her father but looks down toward her hands, whereas Cynthia looks away from the light and back toward Mr. Gibson, but from a bodily position that turns away from him and is the inverse of Mr. Gibson's form. Again we see a compressed and symbolically charged moment realized through visual structure in such a way that emphasizes these divisions even more strongly and overtly than the text itself.

In another set of illustrations du Maurier uses triangular structures to depict Molly's encounters with motherhood. The first of these, "The New Mamma," which faces the first page of Chapter 10, "A Crisis," shows Molly's first meeting with her soon-to-be step-mother, Mrs. Kirkpatrick (Fig. 4.9). In one of the few images in which we see Molly's full face, perhaps either because we associate more easily with Molly when we appear to look on things from her perspective or because the illustrator can more easily craft a realistic physiognomy in two dimensions when created in profile, we see Molly's eyes directed toward the face of Mrs. Kirkpatrick, whom we view from the side. We see du Maurier's skill in creating rich fabric, something Ruddick discusses at length, in the dark, full skirt of Mrs. Kirkpatrick's dress, which contrasts with Molly's simple, white frock. Here we visually encounter aspects of their characters and gain insight into the following narrative that has yet to be experienced by the reader. From this moment the reader is made aware of the differences between these women, something Gaskell reveals to her audience through page upon page of text as the story progresses. From the fancy style of her dress, jewelry, and hairstyle, Mrs. Kirkpatrick contrasts in every way with Molly and her simple dress. Even in their posture the two seem set apart, for we see the older woman's exaggerated attempts at petting Molly as she leans forward and grasps the unreceptive girl's hand, "stroking it from

time to time, and purring out inarticulate sounds of loving satisfaction, as she gazed in the blushing face” (126). Meanwhile Molly’s posture remains upright and rather austere.



Fig. 4.9. George du Maurier, “The New Mama,” for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. X, September 1864, facing p. 583.

This moment, as du Maurier realizes it, when Mrs. Kirkpatrick enters Molly’s life in a real sense foreshadows her efforts to dominate both Molly’s day-to-day life as well as her relationship with her father. Du Maurier shows this by portraying Mrs. Kirkpatrick and her full dress as overwhelming the scene and even cutting across the bottom half of Molly’s figure. Here the two women form a modified triangle from the intersecting point of the skirts and awkwardly clasped hands to the distant points of their faces. However, the separation of their faces prevents the structure from forming a precise triangle, essentially disrupting the

smoothness of composition and reflecting the dynamics of their relationship through this visually fragmented configuration. The distance between their faces emphasizes the distance between their temperaments and female types and suggests the struggles that will follow. Though du Maurier chose to illustrate the moment before Molly “took her hand away, and her heart began to harden” (126), the reader already has a sense of Molly’s inner feelings and of the differences of character that will plague her throughout the novel. In this image and textual moment, Molly’s encounter with motherhood is less than pleasant, but then, so is a later encounter she has with a mother as realized by du Maurier using a similar compositional structure.

In this particular image, titled “Maman, Maman!,” the triangular composition of the scene impacts the viewer quite powerfully (Fig. 4.10). The illustration faces the first page of Chapter 51, “Trouble Never Comes Alone” (a title whose juxtaposition with this image will be discussed later in this chapter), and illustrates a moment in a later chapter when Aimée arrives at Hamley Hall with her son only to learn of her husband Osborne’s death:

At this instant the door softly opened, and right into the midst of them came the little figure in grey, looking ready to fall with the weight of her child.

‘You are Molly,’ said she, not seeing the squire at once. ‘The lady who wrote the letter; he spoke of you sometimes. You will let me go to him.’

Molly did not answer, except that at such moments the eyes speak solemnly and comprehensively. Aimée read their meaning. All she said was, – ‘He is not – oh, my husband – my husband!’ Her arms relaxed, her figure swayed, the child screamed and held out his arms for help. That help was given him by his grandfather, just before Aimée fell senseless on the floor.

‘Maman, maman!’ cried the little fellow, now striving and fighting to get back to her, where she lay; he fought so lustily that the squire had to put him down, and he crawled to the poor inanimate body, behind which sat Molly, holding the head; whilst Robinson rushed away for water, wine, and more womankind. (573)

Such an emotional moment seems an appropriate choice for an illustration, but in conjunction with the previous image of motherhood depicting Molly and her step-mother (Fig. 4.9) the illustrations also convey insight into Molly and the female experience, making these encounters with “new” mothers and motherhood especially significant. Du Maurier maintains Gaskell’s differentiated portrayal of female characters as he achieves a nuance that can be ascertained visually but that approaches the complexity of narrative text. In this example, the two characters who, in many ways, exemplify the ideals of wife and mother, one who has been both and one who has yet to experience either, come together. However, in selecting this precise moment of their meeting for his illustration,



Fig. 4.10. George du Maurier, “Maman, Maman!,” for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. XII, November 1865, facing p. 513.

du Maurier emphasizes the complicated nature of this role and experience. One suffers from the pain of losing her husband, having never met his father or been welcomed into the family home, while the other looks upon what at this moment is not an inviting future, albeit the one

that lies ahead for her. The tight triangle formed by the faces of Molly, Aimée, and Aimée's child, powerfully represents the past, present, and future, something all the more vivid as Molly gazes down on Aimée and so, presumably, her own future. This painful confrontation with the reality of the female social and domestic sphere does not necessarily suggest that Molly will turn away from marriage or motherhood or that she does not still desire to assume these roles in relation to Roger, but it does complicate her character in intriguing and critical ways. The connection between these two women is also conveyed through the point of their hands, forming another angle opening up on their faces. The posture of these two, with Aimée stretched out on the floor where she has fallen and her head resting on the lap of a sitting Molly, also forms a wide angle that opens out toward the reader, inviting the audience into the scene and drawing the reader's attention to the pale, unconscious face of Aimée and the faces of the child and young woman who gaze lovingly and anxiously upon her.⁵¹ The only thing that lies between the reader and this open angle inviting us toward them is the crumpled letter Molly sent Aimée, the letter that brought her there and suggests the very method by which we, too, gain entry into this scene – the text itself. In each of these images, like many others, du Maurier makes use of dramatic structure to reveal aspects of character and plot development as well as complicate our understanding of these, even strengthening

⁵¹ In Deborah Wynne's chapter "Wilkie Collins's *Armada* in *The Cornhill Magazine*," published in her *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*, Wynne refers to this particular illustration and compares Aimée's posture to that of the female subject in Augustus Egg's triptych, *Past and Present*. Such an association furthers this idea of Aimée representing something potentially unappealing to Molly as it compels the viewer to assess Aimée's character in the light of this painting and possibly, as Wayne suggests, hints at elements of the sensational that are never realized (163-164). However, Wynne fails to acknowledge the dramatic differences between the two, most evident in the isolation of the woman in Egg's central, triptych image, whose husband and children remain unmoved by her supplications, which contrasts with the physical and emotional support Aimée receives from both Molly and the cry and gesture of Aimée's child. In this sense, while the two images emphasize the less appealing aspects of being a woman, wife, and mother, Egg's subject, guilty of indiscretion though not unsympathetic, contrasts with Aimée, whose innocence and devotion result in a scene that may be distressing but is not without hope, for her and for Molly. To consider other possible connections related to gender between Gaskell's textual content and other art, specifically that of the Pre-Raphaelites, see Sophia Andres's article "Elizabeth Gaskell's Re-Presentations of Pre-Raphaelite Gendered Boundaries."

points whose seeds may be found in Gaskell's text but that du Maurier intensifies in his own artistic medium.

The spatial configurations of two other images also strike the viewer as they reveal aspects of plot and character, this time in regards to the romantic dynamics between men and women. In the first of these, "Shakespeare and the Musical Glasses," which faces the first page of Chapter 15 but actually illustrates a scene from Chapter 16, "The Bride at Home," we see two pairs of figures in conversation, Molly and Roger as one pair and Osborne and Mrs. Gibson, née Kirkpatrick, as the other (Fig. 4.11). Roger and Molly, Molly sitting with her back and side to the reader as Roger faces out toward the audience but directs his eyes



Fig. 4.11. George du Maurier, "Shakespeare and the Musical Glasses," for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. XII, November 1865, facing p. 65.

toward Molly, appear at the forefront in the lower half of the page. Though Molly's body turns toward Roger, he appears facing out of the page with his legs perpendicular to her figure. Her bodily gesture hints at her future feelings toward Roger, as yet undiscovered by

either Molly or the reader as she still idolizes Osborne, while Roger's body reflects the disinterestedness in Molly as anything other than a friend and sister that will cause her great pain throughout much of the story. The fact that the space around the heads of Roger and Molly appears lighter and with fewer details of texture than the background and wall behind them highlights their significance, especially Molly's, and their relationship. This effect is achieved in part by the light from the fireplace that glows around Roger's left arm. Both of these techniques emphasize these figures and, along with their placement in the front of the scene, solidify their significance as a pair for the reader, something the reader might later interpret as an attempt at foreshadowing on the part of the illustrator.

At the same time, the placement of Roger's hat, resting on his left knee, acts as a sort of central point connecting this front pair with the other pair in the back of the scene, Osborne and Mrs. Gibson. Roger's hat functions as the point of an angle in which the bodies of Osborne and Mrs. Gibson form the sides opening up to a wide angle ending with their faces and gazes directed at one another. The upper bodies of these two also form separate triangles, one formed by Osborne's right arm and upper body that points down toward Mrs. Gibson, and one formed by the angle of Mrs. Gibson's own arms that points out toward Osborne's lower half and opens up onto her face. These angles relate to their connection through this conversation, while at the same time revealing aspects of their characters: Mrs. Gibson's obsession with herself and her interest in impressing others through physical appearance and social pretense set here against Osborne's easy but earnest attempt at discussion, albeit a light discussion of the theatre and London life:

He had the advantage over Mrs Gibson, who, in fact, only spoke of these things from hearsay, from listening to the talk at the Towers, while Osborne had run up from Cambridge two or three times to hear this, or to see that, wonder of the season. But she had the advantage over him in greater boldness

of invention to eke out her facts; and besides she had more skill in the choice and arrangement of her words, so as to make it appear as if the opinions that were in reality quotations, were formed by herself from actual experience or personal observation.... (180-181)

Their posture also plays into creating these portraits of character, as Osborne remains confident and relaxed, casually leaning on the fireplace and crossing one leg over the other, while Mrs. Gibson languidly reclines in her chair so that her body molds to its form and she becomes yet another pretty object in a prettily decorated room.⁵² The reader visually recognizes the dramatic contrasts in character and interest between these two pairs by following their connection through the central point of Roger's hat to their starkly different positions. While Osborne and Mrs. Gibson lean and assume easy postures, Roger and Molly sit more rigidly upright, revealing both the greater gravity of their conversation when compared to the trivialities of the other, as well as the sincerity of their characters and the honest, simple way in which they each live their lives.⁵³ The formality of their attitudes also reveals the tension between them that they (and the readers) gradually come to recognize as emotional and sexual tension.

⁵² A reader familiar with du Maurier's creations for *Punch*, some of them later than the publication of this text, might also recognize the loaded significance of Mrs. Gibson's posture. Images in which du Maurier satirizes the qualities and activities of the middle and upper classes often depict characters, frequently women, reclining in chairs against the backdrop of an impeccably, if not garishly, decorated room. His criticism of these figures, attempting to put on the appearance of sophistication and wealth, often in a feminized manner, matches Gaskell's textual depiction of Mrs. Gibson, making du Maurier's positioning of her all the more fitting. For examples of these other images see "Drawing-Room Minstrels" (*Punch*, 13 July, 1872), "A Belgravian Mother" (*Punch*, 16 Dec., 1875), and "A Forlorn Hope" (*Punch*, 1 July, 1876), among others.

⁵³ The opposition of these pairs also illustrates their difference in temperament and intellectual interest. For a consideration of how Roger represents the new man of science and practicality, even reflecting a sort of result of Darwinian natural selection, against Osborne's older Romantic sensibility, see Julia M. Wright's "'Growing Pains': Representing the Romantic in Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*," Deirdre D'Albertis's *Dissembling Fictions: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Social Text*, Gillian Beer's *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Jennifer Panek's "Constructions of Masculinity in *Adam Bede* and *Wives and Daughters*," and Patsy Stoneman's *Elizabeth Gaskell*, particularly her chapter on *Wives and Daughters*.

As the story unfolds, the images continue to give the reader visual nudges and hints regarding critical moments in Molly's development and her changing feelings for Roger. In the illustration "Roger is Introduced and Enslaved" the triangular composition of the scene is all the more powerful and suggestive as the structure reveals the romantic plot: a love triangle involving Roger, Cynthia, and Molly (Fig. 4.12). This image faces and illustrates a scene from Chapter 21 and, as its title suggests, depicts the moment when Molly introduces



Fig. 4.12. George du Maurier, "Roger is Introduced and Enslaved," for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. XII, November 1865, facing p. 320.

Cynthia to Roger. However, du Maurier compresses the events of the evening into this scene so that visually the meeting itself is so charged that Molly seems immediately aware of its

significance. The illustration shows Molly's hand gesturing toward Roger as she introduces him to Cynthia and the two characters bow to each other, Roger's eyes remaining visible to the viewer as they gaze upon a lovely and uncharacteristically demure-looking Cynthia (238). As in the previously discussed image, the details of texture in the background are left out and so emphasize these three individuals by creating a sort of halo of light and empty space around their upper bodies. Together the three form two triangles, the first evident in the lower bodies of Cynthia and Roger angling up toward Molly at the apex. This triangle cuts off the heads of Cynthia and Roger, while the second triangle, formed by their three faces, opens upward with Molly's face as its lowest point. Both of these triangles center on Molly, emphasizing her as both the point which brings Cynthia and Roger together and the focus of the reader's sympathy and attention. Even the upper part of the frame behind them stresses these three characters and this moment. The other three figures appear as simple background elements, though they, too, look intently upon this meeting, suggesting their awareness of its charged nature and further accentuating its significance.

To make this moment more powerful as an image, du Maurier strays from the precise elements of the text and draws together what actually occurs over the space of the entire evening. In the text, Gaskell describes Roger's asking to meet Cynthia and even suggests Molly's surprise at Cynthia's "grave eyes" and "the sort of child-like innocence and wonder about them, which did not quite belong to Cynthia's character" (238), but she does not allude to Molly's fully grasping what has occurred until Molly watches them during the remainder of the party. Gaskell refers to Molly's interest in talking with Roger after his absence and her disappointment in not being able to do so due to Cynthia's distracting Roger, and Gaskell even suggests that "[i]f Cynthia had not been there all would have gone on as she had

anticipated; but of all the victims to Cynthia's charms he fell most prone and abject" (239). Yet to become fully aware of the implications of the meeting she made possible, Molly must observe them all night, trying to take in their conversation and expressions while helping to serve tea and entertaining two young girls also in attendance. In fact, Gaskell devotes pages of text to describing Molly's frustration at not being able to talk with Roger herself and her eventual disappointment in their brief exchange. Du Maurier's image not only compresses all of this by showing the introduction of Cynthia and Roger as a knowing, saddened Molly looks on, but he seemingly attributes to her an awareness of her own feelings that she as yet does not possess in the story, for even after seeing Roger entice Cynthia to take a macaroon Molly recognizes that she "[feels] uneasy" but "[can] not tell why" (242). The two figures standing behind Molly in the scene also seem to possess an awareness of the significance of this meeting and sympathize with Molly in their rather grim expressions, an element that builds on the emotions conveyed in the image but that is not based on Gaskell's characterizations of these others within the text. Just as du Maurier selected the moment marking Molly's entry into the world of romance, at least as an object of love, and the resulting change in her relationship with her father in "The Love Letter," here du Maurier selects a moment that also functions as a turning point for Molly and her romantic development. In realizing this moment he manipulates the chronology of Gaskell's text, but in so doing he reveals to the reader the significance of the encounter that will occur within the chapter and so builds the audience's anticipation and prepares the reader to fully appreciate and interpret the event appropriately. In addition, by structuring the image's composition as he does, he compels the viewer to acknowledge the importance of this

meeting as well as the love triangle that for a brief moment is visually realized in this image and that will dominate Molly's life in the pages and chapters to follow.

Image and Chapter Title Dynamics

Texts and images cooperate and conflict in another significant way in this novel, as adjacent illustration and chapter titles reveal elements of what follows, often through misdirection. As a means of drawing in readers, the initial, full-page image appears first, inviting the audience to read on and discover what lies ahead. In much the same way, the smaller images appearing with text on the page facing this first illustration appeal to new and returning readers. The requirements of format and marketing that compel such a layout, though familiar to Victorian audiences, still results in the possible association between visual and textual signals that are in fact not connected. However, even these incorrect associations are used to the creators' benefit as a means of drawing in the reader and foreshadowing coming events.

Such relationships can be seen in a set of illustrations already discussed in this chapter, "The New Mama" and "Maman, Maman!" The first of these, "The New Mama," depicting Molly's introduction to her soon-to-be step-mother, faces the first page of Chapter 10, titled "A Crisis" (Fig. 4.9). Although the illustration relates to a scene from Chapter 11, "Making Friendship," the title that appears adjacent to the image, like the image itself, gives the reader insight into the nature and significance of the pictured encounter. For Molly, her father's engagement represents a "crisis" in her own life as she recognizes the threat it poses for her position in their family of two. Her first meeting with Mrs. Kirkpatrick as her father's fiancée represents the reality of the situation and her changing role and, as an experience that

is as unpleasant as she fears it will be, is, in itself, a “crisis.” This juxtaposition suggests a connection that charges the image with even more significance and, although it misdirects the reader who might make such associations between this image and the adjacent chapter title, it indicates the trauma of this moment and the trials that are to follow.

“Maman, Maman!” – the image showing Molly cradling the head of an unconscious Aimée as her little boy by Osborne looks on (Fig. 4.10) – and the adjacent chapter title, “Troubles Never Come Alone,” function in much the same way in manipulating the reader’s expectations. In this case, the “troubles” of the chapter title could refer to Osborne’s death and the situation of his widow and child, but it could also refer to his French wife and her son as the “troubles” that enter Hamley Hall and the lives of Osborne’s father and Molly at this time. Considered in this light, the chapter title underscores the complicated role of the woman and mother Molly confronts in du Maurier’s illustration. The title of the chapter from which the image is drawn, Chapter 53 – “Unlooked-For Arrivals,” relates to the image as a mere statement or description rather than evaluation or judgment such as that implied by the adjacent chapter title. The relationship of these two titles, then, prepares the reader not only for arrivals that are unexpected but arrivals that are in some way unwanted – arrivals that represent “trouble” for Squire Hamley and Molly in an immediate sense as well as hint at the complicated and trying future awaiting Molly herself.

Two other images and the titles of the chapters they face heighten readers’ anticipation through their association in relation to romantic involvements of the novel’s characters. An example of one of these, the illustration titled “Cynthia’s Last Lover” (Fig. 4.13), appears next to the first page of Chapter 56, titled “An Absent Lover Returns.” At this point the reader knows that the distant lover who must return is Roger, who has been away

on his scientific expedition, and the image title and chapter title alone could suggest the same “lover,” Roger. However, without even beginning this next installment the reader knows immediately from the illustration, picturing Cynthia and a man who is decidedly NOT Roger (but is in fact Mr. Henderson), that these titles actually refer to two lovers, not a single one.



Fig. 4.13. George du Maurier, “Cynthia’s Last Lover,” for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66), by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. XII, December 1865, facing p. 641.

The reader can tell in a mere glance that the prettily dressed, well groomed young man leaning in toward a coquettish Cynthia is not Roger, especially given that Roger was described previously as looking like a “strong-built, cheerful, intelligent country farmer” (180) and is not likely to have become more refined in appearance since leaving on his

expedition to the wilds of Africa. The image itself complicates this romantic triangle as another man, Roger, now with the beard that characterizes “Roger the traveler,” appears in the background, standing at the window and looking out toward the couple walking in the garden. This dynamic suggests both that Cynthia’s “last lover,” Roger, watches her with her next lover and that the man with whom she walks, Mr. Henderson, will be her husband and “last lover.” Molly sits next to Roger and looks down rather than out of the window as she is already aware of Cynthia’s change of heart. The direction of her gaze indicates that she feels the pain of Roger’s realization and disappointment, while their tight relation to one another, framed by the window’s curtains, hints at their future romantic bond. In conjunction with the title of the adjacent chapter, this already complex illustration becomes even more complicated as it highlights Cynthia’s familiar inconstancy and points to the impending dissolution of her engagement with Roger – something the reader now expects even before reading the relevant part of the story. The chapter to which this image relates directly, Chapter 56 titled “Off with the Old Love, and On with the New,” further develops this anticipated break, but from the juxtaposition of the adjacent image and chapter titles the audience already knows what to expect.

Finally, the illustration titled “The Last Turning,” appearing next to the first page of Chapter 60, “Roger Hamley’s Confession,” reveals Roger’s romantic maturation and suggests the resolution between Roger and Molly that will follow (Fig. 4.14). The image, the last one included alongside Gaskell’s unfinished text, shows Roger turning back to wave at Molly, here but a speck in the distant house, on his way to the train station to complete his contracted expedition. This time the illustration faces the chapter that inspired its subject matter, but the two still retain a charged significance in relation to one another. Visually the

reader sees Roger physically turning, and here turning *toward* a distant Molly, which relates to the text and Roger's realization of his love for Molly. Roger appears in the foreground looking back at Molly's house in the distance, and the compositional depth of the image puts his face on a plane with Molly, who, in order to be able to see him as she does in the novel must be at the upper floor window. This common perspective level reflects their compatibility and the degree of equality resulting from Molly's knowledge of science, far surpassing the education of other women, that distinguishes their relationship. His change of heart, his emotional "last turning," so to speak, reflects his acceptance of Cynthia's rejection and his new awareness of Molly's true value. Roger expresses this "turning" through the "confession," referred to in the chapter title, that he makes to Molly's father, Mr. Gibson.



Fig. 4.14. George du Maurier, "The Last Turning," for *Wives and Daughters*, (1864-66) by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Cornhill Magazine*, January 1866, facing p. 1.

Unable to visit her because of the threat of spreading scarlet fever, Roger must make his avowal of love to her father. These adjacent titles build on the desire and anticipation the reader already feels in regard to Roger and Molly's finally coming together in such a way that propels them forward with even greater speed and enthusiasm. The image and title manipulate the reader's expectations and drive the reader on, building on the hope Gaskell instills in the reader through her text that Roger will finally find his way to Molly. Although Mr. Gibson responds to Roger's declaration by saying that he will not be "a message-carrier between any young man and woman" (643), the reader finally becomes fully aware of Roger's feelings and feels that he has, in a sense, made his confession to Molly, too. Even the effects of the wind in the image, which drives the rain and blows Roger's handkerchief and coat back toward Molly and her house, reveal his longing to be with Molly as he prepares to face a long voyage that will take him away from her for months to come. Du Maurier takes yet another interpretive liberty by shifting the audience perspective from that of Molly, as Gaskell's narrator describes Roger viewed from the interior of the house by Molly and Mrs. Gibson, to that of the departing Roger. In the end, this is all we are left with in the text and the image, as Molly has become distant to both Roger and the reader, at least for the time, and we, like Roger, withdraw from her life as the novel comes to a close. Though the novel stops a bit short of its planned ending, the reader believes they must and will be married, and as a final image this illustration reflects our exit from the story as well as the literal and figurative "turning" of the novel's final page.

* * *

Du Maurier's images and their power to direct and moderate a reader's anticipation and experience of the text provide a powerful element that both complicates and enriches the novel, confirming and occasionally resisting Gaskell's social and domestic detail. However, most contemporary audiences never get the chance to encounter the work in its original mixed-media format. When *Wives and Daughters*, often identified as Gaskell's greatest work, is taught in the classroom, students typically encounter it in unillustrated editions. Recovery and analysis of this novel's illustrations reveal how two media and artistic visions come together (sometimes cooperatively, sometimes inconsistently, but always provocatively) in a format that not only results in a singular reading-seeing experience and interpretive challenge for the reader of today but provides insight into the creative perspectives of the author and artist and the experience of its original audiences.

Epilogue

Final Thoughts and a “Look” to the Future

A “Look” Backwards...

Each of the preceding chapters offers new readings of seemingly familiar stories by highlighting the influence of their illustrations on readers’ experience of the work and demonstrating the importance of the visual elements that re-shape the authors’ texts. In many cases, these illustrations are lost in modern editions, though even when they are included they fail to draw the critical attention that they deserve.

The distinct points of each chapter work together to complicate ideas of what constitutes the canon and the boundaries of authorship and to demonstrate the extent (or limit) of authorial control as they show the effects of images on the reading experience and emphasize the interpretive act itself. With Thackeray we witness the interesting dynamic of an author retaining complete authorial control by creating his own illustrations, though at times these visual illuminations prove more alienating than enlightening as they work with, rather than translate, text and create a complex tone and reading experience for the audience. This mixed-media work challenges the reader-viewer to correctly interpret and understand the images and their relationship to the story. By doing this it encourages the audience to adopt a degree of skepticism in relation to society and the text itself in ways that the puppet-characters never do or can. From Dickens we see that Stone’s illustrations deserve critical

attention and that the author's efforts to "evolve" in style can result in images that at times compromise the ultimate success of the novel by highlighting the hybridity of the text itself. In Collins's example we witness the visual translation of the implied narrator—an inadvertent effect that echoes the author's technique and serves as a reflection of an author whose hand is ever present in the story as it unfolds. Finally, Gaskell's novel reveals conflicts of gender as the well-known artist's illustrations, though striking and provocative, at moments take over in directing the reader and even occasionally re-write, or subsume, the author's text. Experiencing these works with both word and image not only enriches but challenges our understanding of the texts, pushing readers to reconsider the very nature of meaning and interpretation. In emphasizing such issues, these mixed-media texts compel audiences to revise accepted notions regarding not only these select novels but the canon to which they belong and the way in which we unilaterally approach reading, learning, and literary criticism.

This project by no means represents an exhaustive study of the text-illustration dynamic that features in much of Victorian literature, or even in the novels selected for this study, but it does open the door for future academic work with mixed-media texts and calls for the re-examination of novels and visual elements that have long been overlooked.

Broader Implications for the Project: "Seeing" + "Reading" in the Classroom

In addition to emphasizing the importance of illustrations via the selected texts in this project, my work reflects the trend in academia toward interdisciplinary study and the breakdown of departmental divisions. At the same time, the analyses of this project contribute to a larger argument and methodology that have significant pedagogical

implications. Kate Flint and Patricia Anderson distinguish the Victorian from preceding centuries as an overtly “visual” period, but this historical period represents only the beginning of an ever-increasing emphasis on vision. My work asserts the importance of interdisciplinarity in literary studies as it demonstrates the pedagogical significance of expanding critical approaches in teaching and learning to account for a variety of media in both literature and composition courses.

As the principal means by which we evaluate and participate in our surroundings and the commodity culture of which we are a part, seeing defines us more than ever. Younger generations, inundated with images via countless visual stimuli every day, are especially (de)sensitized and require more and more sensory stimulation. In order to appeal to such a sensibility in a technical age, classrooms (and students) are increasingly brought to life by the incorporation of a variety of media. This is not to say that including these elements represents a ploy for attention, though frequently increasing student interest is a welcome side-effect, but the current cultural climate and technological environment are perhaps most ripe for the resurrection of these mixed-media texts—texts that were at their peak in popularity during a period more similar to our own than students may currently be aware. By studying both word AND image in a given work, especially in those canonical works that have become so pervasive they are frequently alienating (to both students and instructors), readers not only complicate the reading experience in interesting ways but gain greater insight into the publishing and reading markets of the Victorian period. Such an experience (re)introduces students to the whole of a work while allowing for the development of a sort of bridge, or means of connection, between readers of today and the original audiences of the 19th century. Further developing and expanding academic study to account for and

incorporate subjects across disciplines and media will only enrich our understanding of this aesthetic network as it thrived in the Victorian period and continues to flourish and evolve today.

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